SURE-FOOTING
In
Christianity,
Or
Rational Discourses
On
The Rule of FAITH.

With
Short Animadversions on Dr *Pierce's* Sermon; Also on some passages in Mr *Whitby* and Mr *Stillingfleet*, which concern
That RULE.

Ecce nos ex Patribus ad Patres per manus traditam fuisse hanc sententiam demonstravimus.
Athanasius.

By J. Sergeant.

LONDON,
Printed in the Year 1665.

To the

QUEEN:

Madam,

THough the Faith I write for be far more firmly estabilish't then Heaven and Earth themselves, (as the Worlds great Master has by his own word assur'd us) and so needs no Support but its own Invincible Strength: Yet, I am told by my reason, that nothing so clears and recommends Religion to the Generality, as the vertuous *Life* and eminent Devotion of Them that profess it. But, where shall I seek those happiest Effects and noblest Arguments of Truth? If I consider

them in their abſtracted *Idea's* they are Inviſible as Angels; too ſubtle and delicate for vulgar eyes. Where then may *I* hope to meet thoſe excellent Forms veſted with Bodies? if *I* conſult the common Judgment; *I* expect to be ſent to ſome Hermit's Cell, or the private Oratory of ſome holy Votareſs; where *I* may find them, indeed, embody'd; but withal, half-bury'd: Incomparable Lights, but, ſhut up in a kind of dark Lanthorn; where they burn ſafely *I* confeſs, but ſhine to few: while Thoſe *I* ſeek, muſt be high and conſpicuous, to ſend forth their Beams and Influences over all the World; and in that regard, *Courts* are the propereſt Firmament for ſuch Illuſtrious

Stars;

Stars; and Courts are easily seen, but where's the Star?

In this perplexity, *Madam*, it pleas'd the Goodness of Heaven to relieve me; for, as the mention of *Courts* brought immediately into my memory the happiness our Nation is blest with by Your *Majesty's* Residence among us; so the Contemplation of Your Exemplar *Life* fill'd my soul with joy to have found, at last, those sublime and heroick *Virtues*, whose perfect Conformity to the Rules of Catholick Religion is, alone, capable to convince the *Certainty* of its *Truth*. Such an unwearied Constancy in Devotion, such a degree of Fervor in that Constancy, cannot possibly proceed from a luke-warm Probability

in Faith: such frequent Retirements to intimate Conversations with Heaven, such Mortifications, and contempt of Court-Entertainments, and (which is yet harder) such Innocence and Purity amidst the necessary Admittances of them, as they all conspire to speak Your Soul Angelical, so they clearly prove the vigorous Activity of the Faith that breeds them, far beyond the drowsy Indifferency of a probable Opinion. Thus, *Madam*, while Schollars but *discourse*, YOU *live* Demonstrations. Permit me then to use, not Your bare *Name*, but Your *Vertues* as a Patronage to my Endeavours; since the Motive of this my Dedicatory meant These for its Substance, and Your Temporal

poral Supremeneſs onely for a Circumſtance. Others *Complement* while they dedicate, *I Argue* all the while: nor intend *I* this for a farther Diſplay of Your Excellent Vertues (which already are ſufficiently manifeſt to all the World) but to breed a more ſerious reflexion on Them in the minds of thoſe againſt whom *I* write; and other well-meaning, but miſled perſons.

This advantage Your Majeſty and the *Practical* Provers of Catholick Faith have above us *Speculaters*, that Your whole Life is a Continual Argument for It; while we are bound to expect Seaſons and wait Opportunities: Nor ſhould *I* at this time have offer'd

fer'd to appear, had not the Multitude of Books lately Printed against Catholick Religion made it my plain and *necessary* Duty with all my little power to defend *It*. What *I* have endeavour'd, *I* most humbly lay at Your Majesties feet, and remain,

MADAM,

Your Majesties

most dutiful Subject

and most obedient Servant

J. S.

PREFACE

To the Intelligent READER.

IT is little acquainted with the paths which lead to Science who knows not that the ſettling the First Principle *in any Affair, is of maineſt Import towards Satisfaction in that particular; becauſe if ſuch a Principle be not firſt ſettled, the whole Diſcourſe, as relying on that Principle for its Certainty, muſt needs waver and ſtagger. Reflecting on this plaineſt Truth and withal on the manner how very many (I wiſh I might not ſay moſt) Controverſies are manag'd; that is, by debating much about diverſe Concluſions, but very little about the firſt Principle in* Controverſie, *I cannot wonder if Diſputes come ſlowly to an* End *when few of them were ever rightly* begun. *Another miſchief and even deſpair of entire Satisfaction ſprings from hence; that, ſeeing all Diſpute ſuppoſes an Agreement between the Diſputers in ſome acknowledg'd Principle, I much fear, while things are carry'd on this faſhion, this Requiſit is wanting to the Catholick and Proteſtant Controvertiſts; For, neither doth the Proteſtant from his heart hold (witneſs the Books of their moſt extold Champions, and even the* 39. *Articles, to the contrary) the Teſtimonies of Fathers and Councils, Certain and Convictive; nor even Scripture alwayes as to its*

Letter

Letter and the Sence they give it, (for they pretend Infallible Certainty of none of these;) much less does the Catholick agree that private Interpretations of Scripture, or Citations from Fathers (not speaking as Witnesses of the Churches Belief) are of sufficient Authority to settle the True, or overthrow a False or pretended Faith. Yet, notwithstanding all this, each Antagonist permits the other to frame his Discourses upon these Grounds as if he held the Method were good and allowable; which not being heartily granted by either, what satisfaction can we expect but endless and fruitless contests, for want of Agreement in some acknowledg'd Principle, while this Method is follow'd. Nay more, were it suppos'd that both sides had agreed not to reject in their Disputes such a Principle; yet still, however one side might happen to foil the other so far as to make him contradict himself, yet never so as to convince his Tenet of falshood, unless the proces were grounded upon some First, that is, Self-evident Principle, by virtue of whose undoubtable Certainty the Discourse built on it might gain an establishment. Whence also, the result of this way of Discourse can be onely the Credit or Discredit of the Authours; and touches not at all the Thing; Which, without some Evident Principle to establish or overthrow it, hovers in its pure neutral condition of being (as to Assent or Dissent) just a bare saying and no more.

2. *The reason why the First Principle of* Con-

troverſie. *is not more lookt into and clear'd appears to me evidently this, that our modern Diſſenters from the Church and her Faith ſeeing (which is common to Them with all other maintainers of Errours) that to begin with Firſt or ſelf-Evident Principles is the direct road to Science, and therefore abſolutely deſtructive of their Intereſt, avoid as much as in them lies, the laying any ſuch Principles: and inſtead of this apply their whole endeavours to aiery Deſcants upon Words, by ſuch means and Arts as are never likely to give them any determinate Sence; by which craft (the way of Science, being to proceed from one piece of* Sence *to another) they carry the war out of the bounds of Science where ſolid ground is to be found to fix ones foot upon, ſo to overthrow or be overthrown, and transfer it to a kind of* Spatium Imaginarium *of Fancy and unſignifying Sounds, the proper ſphere for Chimerical Diſcourſers to buz confuſedly and make a noiſe in; Where the Catholick muſt either let them alone, and then they cry* Victory; *or follow them thither, and ſo hazard to prejudice his own cauſe by ſeeming to allow their method of diſcourſing. Whereas indeed the Catholick is forc't by their Importunity exciting his Charity towards the unskilfull, to ſhow how weakly they diſcourſe in their own ſhallow way.*

3. *How little faulty the Catholick is in this will be quickly manifeſt, if we conſider that 'tis againſt his Principles and Involuntary in him to*

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take this Method: for, he builds not upon those aiery Skirmishes for his Faith, nor, consequently, esteems he it conquerable by such attempts: he received his Faith from the present Church witnessing it's delivery from the former Age; to this anchorage he sticks; he stands on immemorial Possession, nor doubts he that Christ's Doctrin is his true and proper inheritance, while brought down by the testimony of so many Christian Nations. As long as this foundation stands firm, quirks hurt not him; Shake this, that is, show the Church Essential is Mistress of falshood, and he must doubt all his Faith; but yet cannot hold the Protestants, for he must hold nothing. No Book can secure him, when that Principle which onely can secure to us Books written long ago, is insecure it self. Now, on the contrary, the Protestant builds his Faith by thus hammering it out of unsenc't Characters, and is quite overthrown (would his will give his reason leave to follow his principles) if another more dexterously fit the words to a sence inconsistent with his. And his hopes of standing are not built (as are the Catholicks) on the self-evidence of ony Thing or Principle, but indeed on the Inevidence or Ambiguity of Words and his Way to manage them; which is, to let no Living Authority sence them, and so they will more easily change their shape as the ingenious contrivances of Fancy molds them; and then, if the discourse seem but a little plausible Education and Interest make the Understanding content with very easy satisfaction.

4. *I am far from blaming the Catholicks prudence for engaging on this manner; I rather admire their Charity towards their weaker Brethren, that at the expence of so much patience and pains, such excellent Wits will condescend to so laborious a talk; less suitable both to their own Genius as Catholick, and to the nature of their Cause. How easily might they rest secure upon Immovable Possession, and demand Evidence and Demonstration from the Protestant, who denies his right to Christs Doctrin? How easily might he show their reasons inconclusive (which method was observ'd by a late Learned Writer Mr.* J. S. *against that Pulpit-vapour of Dr.* Pierce) *especially by discovering the unsatisfactorines of the Method they take? How most easily, that they have never a Principle or self-evident Ground to begin with; That till they settle such a First Principle all their Discourse is frivolous; That their rejecting the Churches Living Voice or Tradition brings all into doubt, both Sayings of Fathers and Texts of Scripture; And hence, not to allow them the favour of disputing* ad hominem *from Scripture or Fathers, by granting them any thing Certain, but putting them to prove all; For since they are to object and bring Evident Reason for changing, it lies on them to make their reasons Evident; nor has any Disputant right to have any thing allow'd him Certain, who renounces that Principle, which if renounc't, all is Uncertain: And, lastly, that he who denies the First Principle in any Science, deserves not, nay*

cannot

cannot in reaſon (abſtracted from circumſtances) be diſcourſt with at all in that Science, nor They in Controverſy. *This will force them to lay ſome Firſt or ſelf-evident Principle; which cannot fail to produce theſe two Advantages; One to the World, that it ſhall get into a method of concluding ſomething with evidence: The other to Catholick Religion; For, 'twill be found Impoſſible their Reaſon ſtrain'd to its utmoſt, can invent any other in this matter, but that of* Tradition.

5. *This will clearly ſhorten our debates, and ſave the laborious tranſcribing and Printing Volumes of Teſtimonies, by bringing* Conrroverſy *to the way of Reaſon; for the Certainty of* Firſt Authority *muſt needs be manifeſted by pure Reaſon. But who am I that I ſhould attempt ſuch a change in the method of* Controverſy, *or think my ſelf a fit propoſer or preſſer of it? Far be it from me. Tet, if I miſtake not, Nature her ſelf (whom I ſecond in this deſign) is about doing that work. For, I hear Catholick Writers complain of the Proteſtant (and juſtly too) that he puts him to anſwer what has been an hundred times ſaid before; and I am inform'd an Eminent Proteſtant now writing in behalf of* Dr Pierce, *makes the ſame counter-complaint of the Catholick, and the Diſſuader begins his book with the ſame reſentment: Beſides, I am ſure the Beſt Wits of our Nation are weary of this Method, ſeeing tis no more but* reciprocating a Saw, *or tranſcribing and re-printing what has been done before, onely in another Frame; or, if*

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any new production be made, generally tis nothing but some note collected from some Historical book unobserved by others; which, what satisfactory Evidence tis like to bring with it, is easy to be ghest.

6. Now all this happens through not first settling and agreeing in some First Principle. Not onely for the reasons given in the beginning of this Preface; but also, because (as will be shown hereafter) without this the validity of any Testimony from Father or Council cannot be weigh'd, understood, or prest with force upon the Adversary. For, if These be but parts of the Living Voice of the Church Essentiall of their time, that is, of Christian Tradition, it will follow that till the force of Tradition be evidenc't, Theirs will not be clearly known. Again, Tradition once evidenc't will give principles to distinguish those Citations by, and to secure (as far as is needful) and interpret Scriptures Letter: Whence clear Victory will accrue to Truth, and full Satisfaction to her ingenuous Seekers. Not that I at all doubt, but that many things in Catholick Writers of the Testimonial strain, carry a strong force of Conviction with them; but I see that while the solid Testimonies are not distinguisht and solely insisted on, but run mixt with others of less force, by such a mixture they weaken their own; I see also that they want their effect upon the Protestant, by reason he is not first prest to admit that Evident Principle on which their strength is built; and, which once settled, they are irresistable.

7. The settling then the First Principle in Controversy

verſy being ſo ſupremely important, I have attempted it. Putting this Dilemma to the Proteſtant. Either Controverſy *(or the skill which enables us to conclude certainly what's Faith,) is a* Science, *or not; if not, why do we meddle with it; ſince without Science or Knowledge, all is meer beating the ayr and empty ignorant talking. If it be, common ſenſe tells us it muſt be grounded on ſome firſt and ſelf-evident Principle. Let's to work then, and ſettle this Principle, that ſo we may have ſomething to agree in and proceed upon; that is, be able to diſcourſe together. I have endeavoured to ſhow the Firſt Principle we Catholicks proceed on eſtabliſht on rational Grounds, and ſelf-evident: Let the Proteſtant either agree with us in it, or ſettle ſome other able to render his Citations certain, without which they ought alledge nothing. Nor is it enough for them to catch at ſingle words, or little parcels of my Diſcourſe, (as their way is) but, it being connected, they muſt overthrow the main of it: nor that; but they muſt lay ſome Firſt Principle of their own, elſe they ought affirm nothing, nor ſpeak; for why ſhould any one ſay what he* knows not, *or how can he know without Principles? Eſpecially the Proteſtant is oblig'd to do this, who cannot ſtand on Poſſeſſion, but on his Reaſons why he* mov'd *what he found* ſettled. *This Principle then they are ty'd by all honeſt Conſiderations to produce, and till they do ſo, I muſt frankly declare what reaſon tells ever intelligent man, that thoſe many flaſhy books of late againſt Catholicks, by whomſoever written, deſerve not a word in Anſwer.*

FIRST DISCOURSE,

Showing, *from the nature of* Rule *and* Faith, *what Properties belong to the* Rule of Faith.

AS common Reason gives it evident, that no satisfaction at all can be had in any point whatever without knowing first the Meaning of those Words which express the Thing under debate, since without this the Discoursers must talk of they know not what; so the Art of Logick assures us that, the Meaning of those Words exactly known, a ready way is open'd to a clear decision of the most perplexing difficulties. For, seeing *the Meaning of a Word* includes in it self *the Nature of the Thing* as signified by that Word, in regard it could not mean *That Thing*, unless it also meant it of *such a Nature* which constitutes *that Thing*, so 'tis plain that, the Meaning of the Word once known perfectly, the Nature of the Thing, as signify'd by that word, must be known likewise. Wherefore, since the Nature of the Thing bears along with it all those Considerations and Attributes which intrinsecally belong to such a Nature, and excludes all those which are incompetent to the same Nature, it acquaints us with what can be both *said* and *deny'd* of the Thing, as far as exprest by that word. The perfect knowledge then of the Meaning of the Words

affords us the certain ſolution of all queſtions whether Affirmative or Negative, and is the moſt compendious way to ſettle all Controverſies. Let us therefore apply this method to our preſent purpoſe, and examin well what is meant by thoſe Words which expreſs the thing we are diſcuſſing, namely THE RULE OF FAITH; and we may with good grounds expect a ſolid, clear, and brief ſatisfaction both of what is not that Rule, and what is It.

2. To begin then with what is moſt evident; Seeing a RULE ſignifies a thing which is able to *regulate* or guide him who uſes it, it muſt conſequently have in it all thoſe Qualities by which it is able to do that it's proper Effect; otherwiſe 'tis no Rule, that is, 'tis not apt or able to do what a Rule ſhould do.

3. It muſt then in the firſt place be *Evident as to its Exiſtence*; unto the *Senſe*, if it be to guide *it*; or to the *Underſtanding* if it be an *Intellectual* Rule. For, how ſhould either of theſe be guided by what they neither ſee nor know?

4. Whence follows that it muſt be Evident to all thoſe who are to be regulated by it, that there is ſuch a Thing; otherwiſe it can be to them no Rule; ſince, being unknown, it reaches not, or affects not thoſe perſons who are to be ruled by it; that is, reaches not thoſe things upon which it is to do its Effect; and ſo, cannot rule them, or be a Rule to them.

5. Moreover, to thoſe who can raiſe doubts or

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can have doubts raisd in them, (that is in a manner all Mankind, even the Rudest Vulgar) it must be knowable that the Intellectual Rule they are to be regulated by, has in it self a virtue to rule or guid their understandings right; That is, they must be capable to know that it deserves to be reli'd on as a Rule. Wherefore, this must either be evident by its own light, or at least easily evidenceable by other knowledges or skills presuppos'd in those users of Reason, who are to be guided by that Rule. Otherwise, 'tis against Sense and Reason to yield over ones understanding to be guided by that which he can never come to understand that it has in it any ability or power to guide him.

6. And, because nothing can be evident to be what in reality it is not, it follows that this Thing pretending to be a Rule, must also be *certain in it's self*, or establisht on secure Grounds: For otherwise, 'tis not possible that can in true sence be call'd a *Rule*, which one may follow and yet go wrong, or be misled. The Directive Power then which it has must not be wavering; Wherefore also the causes which conserve it so constantly able to perform that Effect must be established to that degree as to keep it fitting to do the effect proper to its Nature; which is, to be *certain in its self*.

7. Thus much is evidently gathered out of the common Notion of Nature of a *Rule*; That is, out of the genuin and proper meaning of that

ſingle word. We are next to conſider the meaning of the word FAITH. By which we intend not to give rigorous School-definitions of either this or the former word; but only to reflect on and make uſe of ſome Attributes, Predicates or Properties; which in the ſence of ſuch who intelligently uſe thoſe words are apprehended to be involved in or truly appertaining to their ſignification. This caution given to avoid miſtake or cavil, let's enquire of what kind of Nature that thing is which is meant by this word FAITH, and then reflect what further qualifications it requires in it's *Rule*, that is, in the Certain Means which is to guide us to that Knowledge called *Faith*.

8. FAITH then in the common ſence of Mankind is the ſame with *Believing*; and *Divine Faith* in the ſence of the generality of Chriſtians (from whom, as being the intelligent uſers of that word, the true ſence of it is taken) *the Believing God in reveal'd Truths*, which neceſſarily imports ſome kind of *Knowledge of ſupernatural Things*. Again, it being evident and held by thoſe Chriſtians that none can come to Heaven without *knowing* there is ſuch a thing, or ſome very great Good reſerv'd for the next life; nor yet without *loving* it, (for none is thought to go to Heaven whether he will or no) which Love, beſides the Knowledge that Heaven *is*, cannot be had without knowing likewiſe that 'tis a Good incomparably greater than any in this life; nor can theſe Knowledges

ledges be had by *Mankind* but by *Believing*; hence, *Belief of Supernatural things*, or *Faith* is conceived *necessary for the salvation of Mankind.* Nor is this found only in the Judgements the learneder Faithful make concerning it by their Discourse, but in the very Meaning of the word *Faith* as it imports *Knowledge of supernatural things.* It being then granted by all and in it self most rational that some at least of the vulgar are to be saved, that is, are to have *Faith* or *Knowledge of God*, it follows that the Rule of Faith or certain means to arrive at Faith must be appliable to them.

9. Moreover, since the ruder or unskilfuller people are, the lesse capable they are of Science, and none doubts but some, amongst even the rudest, may come to be saved; since we experience they have oftentimes well-meaning, virtuous and devout hearts; the Rule or Means to come to Faith must also be appliable to these; that is, must be such as even the rudest may be capable to know there is such a thing.

10. The Rule of Faith therefore must be Knowable as to it's Existence by natural impressions upon mens Senses, affecting their Souls according to the common light of understanding. For, seeing the rudest are very shallow Reflecters and Discoursers, and suppos'd to be utterly unacquainted with any kind of Skill got by Speculation or Study, the Knowledge of the Rule of

Faith's Existence must not need any skill or Science acquir'd by Study, intervening between the natural power of their Understanding and it; otherwise it could not be Knowable by them; it be to them a Rule, by parag. 4th.

11. Again, seeing those who are very rude are yet capable of being put into Doubts concerning their Faith, either by Sophistry or fair Language, and at length deserting it; and 'tis most unreasonable there should be no means left by God sufficient to settle them; nor can any Means be sufficient if the Rule of Faith (which is the best if not only Means to come to the Knowledge of Faith) be dissatisfactory, or impossible to be shown worthy to be rely'd on; it follows that the Rule of Faith must be of such a nature as is either by its own light evidently secure and worthy to be held a Rule, and this even to the rudest who can doubt; or else easily evidenceable to them to be such by intelligent persons who answers'd in such reflexions, and this out of Principles they are capable of, (as was prov'd parag. the 5th.) that is, requiring onely common and obvious Reason not scientifical speculation to instill them. Otherwise those rude persons would be left unfurnish't of due Means to be stedfast in their Faith.

12. Also, since the Notion of the word *Faith* bears, that 'tis a perfection of the Soul, or a Vertue, and so no act of it *irrational*, but on the contrary, all its Acts rational, and the submission

ſion of our Underſtandings exercis'd in it *rationabile obſequium*, 'tis evinc't that the Satisfactorines of its Rule, ought not onely to be evident or eaſily evidenceable to the rudeſt Doubters, as we now prov'd, but alſo it ought to be ſo qualify'd, that the Faithful who yet have no doubts ſhould do rationally even while they ſimply or unreflectingly adhere to it, and that it ſhould ſupply to their common and uncultivated Reaſon by a natural way what it wants of reflexion: I mean, ſo that the common light of Reaſon may tell them, upon ſolid and true Principles taught them by the ordinary courſe of things in the World, this is to be held or followed, thongh they dive not into the Grounds or particular Reaſons of their tenets or actions, nor can give account of them.

13. And, ſince our Saviour intended thoſe out of the Church ſhould embrace *Faith*, and thoſe who are to be converted are Heterodox, that is, hold contradictorily to the Church, in what they diſſent from her; ſo that if they change, they muſt now hold *is*, indead of *is not*, or *is not* inſtead of *is* (there being no middle to hold to) in thoſe points in which they differ from her, and no change ought to be in reaſon or in a rational Nature (of which Nature thoſe Heterodox are) without true reaſon to change, and the change in our caſe is to be made not to a meer Suspenſion, which is believing nothing, nor to a middle between *is*, and *is not*, but to a contrary or ra-

ther contradictory *Assent*, and no Assent can be without sufficient Cause of Assent, nor is any sufficient in reason to put that Effect or cause Assent in a thing antecedent to Faith, as is the Rule of Faith, but *Evidence*; (for while 'tis but *probable*, that is, while the Understanding must as yet say *I know not it is so*, it cannot say *I know it is so*, which is no more but to *say understandingly* or to *assent* that *it is so*) now the Cause of our actuall assenting to the Churches Faith, is the *Rule of Faith*; It follows out of the notion of *Rational* included in the word *Faith*, as apply'd to convettible persons, that the *Rule of Faith* must be beyond all *Peradventures*, how high and presumed soever they be; that is, absolutely *Evident to us*, and consequently CERTAIN.

14. Moreover, there being many Eminent Wits in the Church vers'd in true Logick & enured to Sciences, and true Logick and the course of Science necessarily telling them that nothing can in perfect reason be *held* by one who penetrates difficulties, but either Self-evident Principles, or Conclusions necessarily deduced by intrinsecal mediums from those Principles, nor can they be necessarily deduced without immediate connexion or Identification of the Terms with the Medium which infers the Identity between themselves in the Conclusion, and that what is not seen to be thus connected is *unknown*, and so, for any thing appears, may be false; and to see a thing may be false, must needs breed some Fear

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of being so, or Doubt, if we be concerned in the Truth or Falsitie of that thing, and none can rationally assent or fix their judgment where there is left some Doubt or wavering of Judgment, and the Judgement or Assent of Faith must be *rotional*; It follows that the Rule of Faith, (which is the immediate Producer and Cause of the Assent of Faith) ought to be of that Nature that it must not onely be plain to the ruder sort, but also contain in it self Seeds of *perfect evidence* to satisfy those learned Persons who shall more narrowly examin it: Otherwise the best and wisest portion, and as it were the flower of Mankind, which guide themselves by perfect reason, could *hold* nothing or have no Faith; That is the Church must onely be made up of ignorant and undiscerning persons; which would make her little better than a Congregation of Phanaticks.

15. Especially the Church having many Adversaries skild in natural Sciences, who will not stick to oppose her all they can, and conquer her too, could they take any just advantage against her; and no greater advantage being possible to be gained or more deadly wound to be given her than to prove her Faith *uncertain*, which is done by showing the Ground of it as far as concerns our Knowledge, that is the Rule and Means to come to Faith, possible to be false; For this at once enervates her Government, vilifies her Sacraments, weakens all the motives to the love of Heaven, which she proposes, and by consequence

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quite enfeebles the vigour of Christian Life; or rather, this made manifest, by reason of temptations to the Love of Creatures perpetually and on all sides besieging us, endangers to extinguish it utterly; and, lastly, makes Christians the most ridiculous people in the world to believe such high mysteries above their reasons upon uncertain Grounds: Tis manifest therefore that the only safeguard and all the strength of the Church and Christian Religion is placed in the absolute Certainty of the Rule of Faith: Tis made therefore and ordained to ascertain Faith; that it, it has in it what is fit for this end; that is, it is of its own nature *absolutely certain*; that is, absolute Certainty is found in the nature and notion of the *Rule of Faith*; or, which is all one, is signified or meant by those words thoroughly understood.

16. And lastly, Faith being a Virtue mainly conducing to Bliss (as is seen §. 8.) and its Influence towards Bliss (which we call its *Merit*) consisting in this that it makes us submit our Understanding to the Divine Veracity and by that means adhere unwaveringly to such Truths as raise us to Heaven, so that the Divine Authority apply'd is the Principal Cause or Motive of this submission, assent or adhesion; and every Cause producing its effect better and stronglier by how much the nearer and closer 'tis apply'd, and all the application of it to us consisting in the Rule of Faith, whose office it is to derive down to us

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those doctrines Christ taught and to assure us that Christ said them; and the application of a thing closely to a Judging Power being performed by *Certifying* it, which makes it *sink* into it & become an intimate Act of that Power, whereas Uncertainty can only admit it to swim as it were upon the surface of the Soul, much after the manner of a bare Proposal or simple apprehension, or at best as a Probability, not having weight enough of motive to settle deep into its solid substance which is Cognoscitive and so become there a fixt Judgement; it follows that the Virtue of Faith and its Merit are incomparably advantaged by the absolute Certainty of the Rule of Faith and very feeble and inefficacious without it. This Rule then must be *absolutely-Certain* of its own nature, that is, the notion of *absolutely-Certain* is involv'd in the Rule of Faith.

17. Summing up then the full account of our Discourse hitherto it amounts to this that out of the genuine meaning of the word *Rule* which as used by us denotes an *Intellectual Rule*, & much more out of the meaning of the word *Faith* it is clearly evinced that the Rule of Faith must have these several conditions; namely, it must be plain and self-evident as to its Existence to all (§. 3, 4, 9, & 10.) & Evidenceable as to its Ruling Power to enquirers even the rude vulgar (§. 5. & 11.) apt to settle & justify undoubting persons (§. 12.) to satisfy fully the most Sceptical Dissenters

senters (§. 13.) and rational Doubters (§. 14.) and to convince the most obstinate and acute Adversaries, (§. 15.) built upon unmoveable Grounds, that is Certain in it self, (§. 6. 15, 16.) and absolutely ascertainable to us (§. 5, 11, 13, 14.)

SECOND DISCOURSE.

Showing the two first Properties of the Rule of Faith *utterly incompetent to* Scripture.

1. HAving attained so clear a Description of the *Rule of Faith* and acquaintance with it by particular marks, we may with reason conceive good hopes of knowing it when we meet it: Especially, not having a great croud from which we are to single it out, the pretenders to that title being very few; and, indeed, but two are owned, namely Tradition and Scripture; though if we look narrowly into it, the Private Spirit, Private Reason, Testimonies of Fathers, or whatsoever else is held the ascertainer of Scriptures sence ought to have a place among the pretenders to be the Rule of Faith; since tis those which are thought to give the reliers on them all the security they have of *Gods sence*, that is, of Points of Faith, and so are or ought to be to them a Rule of Faith. 2. But,

2. But, to speak to them in their own Language who say Scripture is their Rule, we must premise this Note, that they cannot mean by *Scripture* the *Sence* of it, that is, the things to be known, for those they confess are the very Points of Faith, of which the Rule of Faith is to ascertain us: When they say then that *Scripture is the Rule of Faith*, they can onely mean by the word SCRIPTURE, that Book not yet senc't or interpreted, but as yet *to be senc't*; that is, such and such Characters in a Book with their Aptness to signifie to them assuredly Gods Mind, or ascertain them of their Faith: For, abstracting from the *sence* or *actual signification* of those words, there is nothing imaginable left but those *Characters* with their *Aptness* to signifie it.

This understood, let us apply now the Properties of the Rule of Faith to Scriptures Letter, that we may see how they will fit.

3. And the first thing that occurrs is its Existence or *An est*; that is, whether those Books pretended to be Gods Word bee indeed *Scripture*, that is, written by men divinely inspired; Of which 'tis most manifest the very rudest sort cannot be Certain by Self-evidence, nor can it be easily evidenceable to those Doubters that are the ordinary sort of the Vulgar by any skill they are capable of; nor even to more curious and speculative Searchers but by so deep an inspection into the sence of it as shall discover such secrets that Philosophy and Human Industry could

could never have arrived to. Besides, all the seeming Contradictions must be solved ere they can out of the bare nature of the Letter conclude the Scripture to be of Gods enditing, and so worthy to be a Rule; to solve which literally, plainly and satisfactorily, the memories of so many particulars, which made them clearer to those of the Age in which they were written and the matter known, must needs be so worn out by tract of time, that 'tis one of the most difficult tasks in the World. The Scriptures Letter then is not the Rule of Faith (by §§ 3, 4, 5, 10, 11. of our former Discourse) as wanting Self-evidence of its Existence, Easie Evideneableness of its Ruling Virtue, and Power to establish and satisfie at least unlearned Doubters.

4. Secondly, were it known that there are some Books left written by men divinely inspired, yet it is unknown how many those Books ought to be, and which of the many controverted ones may securely be put in that Catalogue, which not: Which 'tis most palpable that either few or at least the rude vulgar and common sort of Mankind, (especially those who are not yet Faithful, but looking to come to Faith, which is done by knowing *the Rule of Faith*) can never be assured of, either by Self-evidence of the things themselves, or by other skills they are already possest of. The Scripture's Letter then is from this Head concluded defective in the forementioned Properties necessarily belonging to the Rule of Faith.

5. Thirdly,

5. Thirdly, Were the Catalogue of the true Books known, yet how is it ſelf-evident or eaſily evidenceable to the capacities above named (if to any) that the very Original or a perfectly true Copy of theſe Books was preſerved indefectibly entire, out of which our Tranſlations were made? Can the ruder ſort either know this or be aſſured of the skill of others by which they know it? The former being manifeſtly impoſſible; the later equally ſuch; ſince they have no knowledges in their heads enabling them to judge unerringly of the competency of others skill in ſuch a particular. Wherefore, Scriptures Letter faulters ſtill in the primary, moſt neceſſary and eſſential conditions of a *Rule of Faith.*

6. Fourthly, Were it evident that the right Original or true Copy of it is preſerved indefective, yet very few, that is, only thoſe who are perfect in thoſe ancient Languages, can arrive to the underſtanding ſo much; The reſt, which are in a manner all Mankind, muſt come to the knowledge of it by Tranſlations; and, ere they can think it is fit to be a Rule, they muſt know it is rightly tranſlated; For which, becauſe they have no skill in thoſe Languages themſelves, they muſt rely on the Tranſlators skill: Concerning whoſe ſufficiency of underſtanding to be able to tranſlate unerringly right, and honeſty of Will or true intention to do it, themſelves, at leaſt the rudeſt vulgar, are not qualified enough to

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jndge assuredly, that they are worthy to be securely relied on. So that we are still at a loss in this pretended Rule of Faith for our first and fundamental conditions.

7. Fifthly, Let us pass by all these defects, and grant it most truly translated to a tittle (and indeed to a tittle it should be, else an errour may slip in instead of a Point of Faith, for any thing the bare Letter can assure us) yet the innumerable Copiers before Printing, and since Printers and Correcters of the Press are still ro be relyed on: and they onely can have evidence of the right Letter of Scripture, who stood at their elbows attentively watching they should not erre in making it perfectly like a former Copy; And even then why might they not mistrust their own eyes and aptness to oversee? Or, were it granted these men err'd not, nor themselves in overlooking them, yet the same difficulty occurrs concerning the former Printer's care if the former Copy were printed, or the Scriveners if Manuscript, which scapes the view of our now-livers, except we will examin them again from Impression to Impression, or from Copy to Copy by others more ancient; and still let us run as high as we will the same difficulty pursues us. To which if we add that the Printers, Correcters or Transcribers might hap to be Knaves, and either be Hereticks themselves or brib'd by Hereticks, whose manner it being ever to make the Letter of the Scripture their weapon, they could

could wish no greater advantage than to have it fram'd commodious to their hand, and so would questionless endeavour it, and History assures us they did. So that we are still at the same or a greater loss in our pretended Rule of Faith.

8. Lastly, were all this multitude of Exceptions pardon'd, still we are as far to seek, unless those who are to be rul'd and guided by the Scripture's Letter to Faith were Certain of the true sence of it, which is found out by right Interpretation. Now the numerous Commentators upon it and infinite disputes about the sence of it even in most concerning points, as in that of Christ's Divinity, beat it out so plain to us that this is not the task of the vulgar (who yet are capable of salvation, and so of Faith, and so of the Rule of Faith) that 'tis perfect phrenzy to deny it.

9, It may be alledg'd that some of these defects may be provided against by skill in History. But 'tis quickly reply'd, that then none can be secure of their Rule of Faith, nor consequently have Faith, unless skill'd in Histories or knowing those men to be so, and withall unbyast, whom they converse with; nay, without knowing that those men knew certainly the Historians whom they rely'd on had secure Grounds, and not bare hearsay for what they writ, and that they were not contradicted by others either extant or perish't: now, how few of the unlearned vulgar, nay even of the middle sort of prudent men

which make up the generality of the world, I may say, of very good Scholars, can judge of these points? And, if they cannot, how then is their Faith rational or virtuous and not rather an hair-brain'd opinionative rashness to build their Assent, Faith and Salvation upon Principles they can make no Judgment of?

10. If necessity make some willing to reply what their Judgments naturally flowing from their Principles would not, that *God assists his Church*, and therefore his Providence will take care the contingencies their Rule of Faith, the Scripture's Letter, is subject to, shall be avoided; 'tis ask't, how they are certain, in their way, of such an Assistance, but by the Letter of the Scripture? They must first then prove that Certain, ere they mention the Church or God's Assistance to her; since this Assistance is, in their Grounds, founded upon the Truth and Certainty of that Letter. Besides, a Church is a Congregation of the Faithful, that is, of such as have *Faith*; which not being possible to be had without Certain means to come unto it, or the *Rule of Faith*; it follows that the first thing that must be clear'd is the Certainty of the Rule of Faith; antecedently to the Notions of *Faith*, *Faithful* or *Church*.

11. If Testimonies out of *Councils* or Fathers be alledg'd by them sufficient Interpreters of Scripture, tis reply'd that if those be needful to make a Certain Interpretation of Scripture, or

(which is all one) the Letter of Scripture certainly ſignificative of God's ſence; then, Firſt, none can be capable of the Rule of Faith, nor conſequently of Faith, but thoſe who are read in Councils and Fathers: nor yet, unleſs thoſe Authorities be held Infallible in ſuch an office; which none but Catholiks will ſay; for if they can erre in ſuch a performance, how ſhall we be certain they do not erre in each particular Interpretation, without ſome other Guide to eſtabliſh them and ſecure us; which Guide muſt be infallible in ſuch an affair, elſe the ſame queſtion and doubt returns concerning It: And, if there be ſome other infallible Guide whoſe conſtant direction ſecures them from erring in every particular Interpretation and aſcertains us of the ſame, let them name It, not Fathers and Councils to interpret Scripture by. But the third and moſt Fundamental fault is that a *Father*, as the word is commonly uſed, and now taken by us, ſignifies not a *Doctor* or learned Deducer of Conſequences by human learning, nor a *Commentator* upon Scripture, nor a *Preacher* or Homily-maker (for ſo every Doctor, Commentator and Preacher would be a *Father*) but an *Eminent and Knowing Witneſſer to Poſterity of the ſence and Faith of the Church* which he received: The notion then of CHURCH is preſuppoſed to the knowledge of what is meant by the word *Father*, or to the notion of a Father. Again, a *Council* ſignifies a *Repreſentative of the Church*, whence,

'tis Relative to what it repreſents, and ſo its meaning cannot be known unleſs that others to which it relates be firſt underſtood; nor can it be a true and right Council unleſs what it repreſents be a true Church. Both *Council* therefore and *Father* preſuppoſe the notion of *Church*; *Church* preſuppoſes the notion of *Faithful*; *Faithful* the notion of *Faith*; *Faith*, of *the Rule of Faith*; 'Tis moſt evident then that, in the way of generating Faith, the knowledge of the *Rule of Faith* is antecedent to the knowledge of all theſe; and ſo none of theſe can help one, who diſcourſes orderly and rationally, to the Knowledge of the Rule of Faith, unleſs accidentally; as it may happen a Father may be a Doctor or great Schollar; and ſo by a rational diſcours opening the meanings of the words (or, which is all one, the notion or nature of the Things) give us inſight to know what it is which has the properties of ſuch a Rule. In vain therefore do they ſtrive to piece out the ſufficiency of Scripture's Letter to be the Rule of Faith by thoſe helps; ſince the being of that Rule is preſuppos'd entire in it ſelf before their exiſtence, and indeed is that which gives them all the Being they have.

12. Some may reply that Fundamentals are clear in Scripture. But, firſt, a certain Catalogue of Fundamentals was never given and agreed to by ſufficient Authority; and yet without this all goes to wrack; ſince the neglecting

lecting or not-knowing which be Fundamental hazards to ruine all: For the discourse grows tickliſh when we talk of *Fundamentals*; this very word importing that any one left out or miſtaken overthrows the whole End of Faith to thoſe which miſcarry in it. Secondly, is it a Fundamental that Chriſt is God? If ſo, I ask whether this be clearer in Scripture than that God has hands, feet, noſtrils and paſſions like ours? Seeing then the appearing clearneſs of the Scripture's letter in this later point is certain to lead vulgar heads into exceeding great Errours, and that Hereſies are as ſeemingly clear in the outward face of it as Fundamental Truths, how miſtaken a Principle do they relie upon for the main hinge of their ſalvation, who ſay that Fundamentals are ſo clear in Scripture's Letter to every capacity.

THIRD DISCOURSE.

That the Three next Properties of the Rule *of* Faith *are utterly Incompetent to* Scripture.

1. THus much to ſhow that the Letter of Scripture wants the two firſt and moſt Fundamental Conditions of a Rule of Faith; being neither Evident as to it's Exiſtence to all, nor Evidenceable as to its Ruling Power to unlearned Enquirers. Let us proceed to the third Property, namely, its *Aptneſs to ſettle and juſtify thoſe unlearned perſons who rely undoubtingly upon it*, ſuch as are the meaner ſort of the Vulgar, who take things by courſe as they fall, in a natural kind of way without reflecting upon them and their reaſons.

2. Since then no Man or rational Creature can be juſtifiable either for Aſſent or Practice but by proceeding upon ſome Principles, and ſuch as, to his beſt judgment, he takes to be true ones, and thoſe Principles can be but of two ſorts, *viz.* either inbred in him by the ordinary Light of Nature, call'd *Common Sence*, or got by ſome reflexion; and that the perſons we ſpeak of are ſuch as proceed undoubtingly, that is, without occaſion to reflect; 'tis left that what can juſtify them muſt be Principles of *Common Sence*. Seeing then 'tis both againſt all Principles of Common Sence to judge that themſelves have any

any ſelf-aſſurance of the Scripture's Letter, knowing themſelves utterly ignorant when 'twas writ, by whom, how brought down, *&c.* and equally ſenceleſs to *believe* a multitude which ſayes it may poſſibly erre in what it tells them, it follows that they are left unjuſtify'd, nay condemn'd by Common Sence in abſolutely *believing* ſuch a Rule; That is, condemn'd by the beſt judgments they are Maſters and capable of. This, I ſay, follows in caſe this multitude be truly dealt with, and that the Teachers give them a ſincere account of their own Tenet. Nay, ſhould theſe men ſay they cannot erre in ſuch a matter, by reaſon of their great Schollerſhip, as ſkill in Hiſtory, Languages, reading of Fathers, Councils, and ſuch like, yet even then they could not afford them credit to ſuch a degree as to build their hopes of ſalvation on their word, in regard thoſe learned mens Profeſſion is not of plain Senſations by their Eyes and Ears which the vulgars experience capacitates them to judge of, but of ſuch high skills as unlearned men know not what to make of, and even underſtand not what the very words which expreſs them mean. The beſt then they can do is to hope that perhaps thoſe men may have ſome ſuch ſtrange skill, in the ſame manner as they truſt to other Tradeſmen and Artiſts they have heard well of or ſeen ſome of their work; or rather not near ſo much; ſeeing their Senſes give them a far better know-

ledge of these Handycraftsmen's skill by the Effects and their fitness for the use intended, than their uncultivated Reason can give them of the goodness of Christian Doctrin and its proportion to Bliss. But the main is, when they shall hear and see many several Professions all pretending to Scripture, yet all differ, damn and condemn one another, perhaps persecute one another and fight about Religion, and themselves unable to judge which is most to be trusted; what can common Sense dictate to them but an inextricable blunder, and onely clear to them thus much that that can never be the way which many follow and yet many must needs be misled: Their most vulgar reason easily telling them that there can be but one Truth, that is, that all the other Professors to follow Scripture do notwithstanding believe and speak false. Now these honest Scholars of plain down right Nature, & that of her lowest form too, being unable to judge which truly follow the Scripture's Letter; and onely capable to know they all profess it with Words and Actions expressing the greatest seriousness in the world; are to think that all equally mean to follow it to their power. Whence, their common reason will tell them (though they cannot express it in our terms, or defend it) that meerly for want of Light, that is Evidence in the Directive Power of that Rule, they all but one party (and perhaps that too as well as the rest) go most miserably astray. This third Property then

then of the Rule of Faith, namely, *to justify the undoubting vulgar*, is wanting to Scriptures Letter.

3. There follows the fourth Property of the Rule of Faith, which is that it must be *able* of its own nature *to satisfy the most Sceptical dissenters and rational doubters* that the Doctrin it holds forth came from Christ. To make a true conceit of what may be judg'd sufficient for this End, let us reflect on the nature and temper of such Dissenters and Doubters, and we shall quickly discover that they are men given to stir their thoughts by much reflexion and to call them to a strict account ere they yield them over to Assent: Wherefore, if we suppose them true to their own thoughts and not to betray the Light of their Reason to some Passion (in which case their Faith it self were in them a Vice) we cannot imagin that any thing under Demonstration can bind and restrain those active and volatil Souls from fluttering still in Objections and hovering in doubts when their Eternal Good is concern'd: Especially, when an Authority is about scanning, upon whose word they are bound, after they have approv'd it, to believe unconcievable and unheard of things, above the reach of human Reason & Apprehension. Let now any man go about to demonstrate to those great wits these points, That the Scripture's Letter was writ by men divinely inspir'd, That there is never a real one however there may be many seeming

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ing Contradictions in it, and this to be ſhown out of the very Letter it ſelf; That juſt this Catalogue or number of Books is enough for the Rule of Faith, and no one Neceſſary that was loſt, none be abated; or, if ſo, how many; That the Originals out of which the Tranſlations were made, were entire and uncorrupted; That the firſt Tranſlations were skilfully & rightly made, and afterwards deriv'd down ſincere, notwithſtanding the errableneſs of thouſands of Tranſcribers, Printers, Correcters, *&c.* and the malice of antient Hereticks and Jews who had it in their hands: And, laſtly, That this, and this onely is the true ſence of it; to which is requiſite great skill in *Languages* to underſtand the meaning of words; in *Grammar*, to know what meaning they ſhould generally bear according to its Rules as thus conſtrued or put together; *Criticiſm*, to know what a word doe moſt commonly or may poſſibly ſignify by rules of nicer Etymologies or acception of Authours antient or modern, by dialects of ſeveral Countries, *&c.* *Hiſtory*, to make known the true ſcope of the Authour, the beſt Interpreter of his meaning; *Logick*, to draw conſequences aright, and ſo find out the thread of the diſcourſe, to avoid equivocation in words, by diſcovering which are to be taken properly, which Metaphorically; And, to apply this right, ſome skill in the things themſelves, that is, in *Nature* and *Metaphyſicks*, eſpecially that which treats

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of the nature of Spirits, as the Soul, Angels, God and his Attributes; but especially in *Divinity* both Speculative and Moral; which (by the way) supposes Faith and comes after it, and so cannot be presuppos'd to the Rule of Faith which precedes it. Let any man, I say, go about to demonstrate all these difficult Points to those acute men and will they not smile at his endeavors? since most of them that concern the truth of the Letter are such that we want Principles to go about to evidence them; and the rest so obscure that a searching and sincere wit would still find something to reply to rationally, or at least maintain his ground of Suspence with a *Might it not be otherwise?* And, were some one or two of these points demonstrable, yet who sees not it is a task of so long study that a great part of a man's life would be spent in a wearisome and hopeless endeavour to come to Faith by this tedious method; which would both disinvite to a pursuit; and even a diligent man may in likelihood die ere he could rationally embrace any Faith at all. Faith then being intended for a man to lead his life by, 'tis necessary it's Rule and the means to come to it should be easily victorious, by reason of it's Certainty and Evidence, over the shock of Doubts or the assaults of Intellectual Fears. In which the Scripture's Letter being defective, 'tis plain that 'tis far from the Nature of a Rule of Faith.

4. The same discourse holds to prove that the

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Scripture's Letter is not *convictive of the moſt obſtinate and acute Adverſaries*, which is the fifth Property of the Rule of Faith. Yet, to apprehend this more lively, let us imagin it apply'd to practice, and that ſome Text of Scripture were quoted to convince a *Deiſt* in ſome point. He asks how you are certain that Book is God's word? You alledge the Excellencies of it; which indeed are ſuch that eyes already enlighten'd by true Faith may diſcern ſomething in it above nature, and cry, *Digitus Dei eſt hîc*, though not his dim ſight: He anſwers that many parts of it are indeed very excellently good, but that the Devil can transform himſelf into an Angel of Light. On the other ſide he requites your Excellencies with many ſtrange Abſurdities and Hereſies even by your own confeſſion in the open Letter as it lies, and moſt unworthy God; as that he has hands feet and paſſions like ours according to which he is variable. He finds you direct Texts againſt acknowledg'd Science in divers particulars, and reckons up a multitude of Contradictions to his Judgment. You anſwer that thoſe places are underſtood according to human apprehenſion, and are indeed incompetent to God, but that there are myſtical and ſpiritual meanings couch't in thoſe ſacred Oracles, which with the help of Hiſtory would reconcile thoſe ſeeming Contradictions. He cries, you quite abandon your pretended Rule, that ſince you confeſs Hereſies are in the open Letter taken as it lies,

lies, you muſt have ſome Knowledge in your Head concerning God which makes you decline the ſence of the words as they lie and run to gloſs them; and demands whence you came by thoſe tenets which oblige you to correct the plain Letter; challenging your thoughts and carriage as witneſſes that that which imbu'd you antecedently with thoſe contrary Tenets, not the Scripture's Letter, was your true Rule of Faith; in regard you frame It according to the Intereſt of thoſe foreheld Tenets. He preſſingly therefore demands whence you had thoſe Tenets or Points of Faith by which you guide your ſelf in adhering or not adhering to the Scripture's Letter as it lies?

5. If you ſay, from other places of Scripture controlling plainly the others; he replies, this can onely make you acknowledge Scripture's Letter plainly contradicts it ſelf, and ſo leaves you doubtful which ſide to hold, as far as the bare Letter carries you; or, if it invites you to any thing, 'tis to hold both ſides of the contradiction. What therefore he ſtill demands is, what it is which forelaid thoſe Judgements in you by which you were byaſt beyond the power of the Letter's Indifferency to hold one ſide rather than the other? Here you are at a loſs with your pretence of the Letter's Authority, being gone beyond it. If then you recurr to Reaſon and Science, teaching you that God is immutable, a Spirit, &c. he ſtraight replies, Then that Science taught you that Point whether Scripture had

had been or no. It therefore was your Rule in this, (and the same may be said of what-ever you avail your self to interpret Scripture by) not the *Letter*. If you say you rely on the Science or Skill of your Parents, Forefathers, and Pastours, then their skill which ascertaind them of Gods sence (not Scripture's Letter) was their Rule, and so is likewise yours; for whoever relies on any precisely as skilful, relies in very deed and properly on their skill, and not on the Letter their skill works upon. Besides, one not skilful himself, is a bad Judge how far anothers skill extends. If you say you rely not on their skill, (fallible perhaps in them, and obscure to you) but on their Senses enabling them to be knowing Witnesses of what was delivered them, and free from the former exceptions, you are driven for your last refuge to *Tradition*, and still desert your Letter-Rule. In a word, he challenges the consciousness of your most inward thoughts, whether (however in Controversies against others you quote Scripture, yet) in reading the Letter for your own Faith, you bring not along with you some thoughts to interpret it by, which you are resolved to hold to; and so the Scripture Letter lies before you as matter to work on, so as to preserve it significative of what you judge sound, and not to frame your Judgements by: that is, you use it as a thing *ruled*, not as a *Rule*. Nay more, if you look narrowly into the bottome of those Thoughts, you shall discover the natu-

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ral method of Tradition to have at unawares ſetled your Judgements concerning Faith, and actually guiding you in the Interpretation, however when your other Concerns awake deſign in you, you proteſt againſt it, and ſeem perhaps to your unreflecting ſelf to embrace and hold to the meer guidance of the Letter.

6. Again, Waving the inſufficiency of the Scriptures Letter to declare its own ſence, he asks this ſmart queſtion, how you are certain of the Truth of the Letter in this very Text; and demands your certain proof or demonſtration either either for the Thing, or for the Certainty of the Authority upon which you hold that any particular Text you alledge is truly a part of the Scriptures Letter, and not foiſted in, or ſome way altered in its ſignificativeneſs: or, how you know by the diligence of the Letter-examiners, if it be a negative Propoſition, that the particle *not* was not inſerted; if affirmative, not left out. You alledge Conſent of all our Copies: He replies, firſt, that this onely argues that thoſe ancient Copies whence ours came were alike (perhaps not ſo much) but who knows or can undertake that they were not alike faulty, or alike Unlike the true Original? or, that there were not ſome in thoſe dayes which never came to our knowledge, different from ours in the very point between us? In a word, that all depends on the Truth of the Copies immediately taken from the Original, or the very next to them; which, what they were,

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by whom taken, where and how preſerved from time to time, how narrowly examined when they were firſt tranſcribed, and ſuch like, is ſo buried in obſcurity and oblivion, and ſo far from Evidence apt to beget Certain Knowledge, that we muſt have recourſe to Charity to allow it our Hopes, had we no other Rule of Faith than that bare Letter. Again, though human diligence did play its part, yet it is acknowledg'd (ſayes your Deiſt) that there are almoſt innumerable *Variæ Lectiones* in it ſtill controverted; nay ſo many in the new Teſtament alone obſerved by one man (my Lord *Uſher*) that he durſt not print them for fear of bringing the whole Book into doubt; and, why may not there have been ſuch formerly and now blindly determined and ſwallowed in each Text that concerns our maineſt Points of Faith. If you reply (as Nature will lead you) that the Faith of Chriſt believed and taught from Father to Son was writ in the hearts of the Faithful; and this made them both able and willing to (that is, actually did) preſerve the Letter from Errour in any paſſage that concerned the Body of Chriſtian Doctrine; he challenges you to fly your Colours, to deſert your own Rule, and embrace Tradition, the Rule of Roman-Catholikes; and laſtly, that you make Scriptures Letter the thing Ruled, not the Rule: Yet without this recourſe, no ſatisfactory account can poſſibly be render'd to a ſtrict Examiner why Errour might not creep into the Text in ſubſtan-

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tial points of Faith as well as in less concerning passages: which devolves to this, that the Scripture's Letter held forth as a Rule of Faith *can never convince an obstinate and acute Adversary.*

FOURTH DISCOURSE,

That the Two last Properties of the Rule *of* Faith *are clearly incompetent to* Scripture.

1. THere remain the two last conditions; *Certainty in its self, and Ascertainableness to us.* That the later is incompetent to Scripture alone or unassisted by another certain Rule, that is, incompetent to it as a Rule, however it may agree to it as a thing regulated or ruled, is the Subject in a manner of all our foregoing Discourse; and it so depends upon the former Property of the two last named, *Certainty in it self*, that if it fails, that later is impossible. Now, as for its *Certainty in its self* or its being establish't on secure Grounds, we may consider Scripture's Letter either Materially as such and such Characters, or Formally as Significative of a determinate sence suppos'd to be Christ's; and both of these either in its single self, or as dependent on other helps or Causes on foot now in the world according to the course of things.

2. And, as for the meer material Characters in Books, 'tis evident that they are of themselves as liable to be destroy'd as any thing else in Nature, as burnt, torn, blotted, worn out, &c. Which though it seems a remote and impertinent Exception, yet to one who considers the wise Dispositions of Divine Providence it will deserve a deep Consideration. For, seeing the Salvation of Mankind is the End of God's making Nature, the means to it should be more settled, strong and unalterable than any other piece of Nature whatever; Putting then Scripture's Letter to be this Rule, and that all its Significativeness of God's Sence, that is all its virtue of a Rule, is lost if the material Characters, its Basis, be destroy'd or alter'd; who sees not a very disorderly proceeding in laying so weak means in such immediateness to so main an end; and concludes not thence that Faith's Rule ought in right reason have a better Basis than such perishable and alterable Elements?

3. Reflecting next on those material Characters in complexion with the Causes actually laid in the world to preserve them entire, we shall find that either those Causes are Material, and then themselves are also liable to continual alterations and innumerable Contingencies; or Spiritual, that is, men's Minds. Now, these being the noblest pieces in Nature, and freed in part from Physical mutability by their Immateriality, we may with good reason hope for a greater

greater degree of constancy from them than from any other; and indeed, for a perfect unalterableness from their Nature, and (this being to conceive Truth) an Inerrableness, if due circumstances be observ'd; that is, if due proposals be made to beget Certain Knowledge, and due care us'd to attend to such Proposals: Otherwise their very Createdness and Finitness entitle them to defectibility, besides their obnoxiousness to mutation and perpetual alteration through the alloy of their material Compart. I call it *due proposal* when it must necessarily affect the Sense, and so beget *natural Knowledge*; or when unequivocal terms are so immediately and orderly laid, that the Conclusion must as necessarily be seen in the Premises as that the same thing cannot both be and not-be at once, by a mind inur'd to reflexion and speculation; and I call that *due care*, which preserves the Soul in such temper as permits the objects impression to be heeded and the Mind to be affected by it.

4. This premised we may reflect that the Rule of Faith as was provd (*Disc.* 1. §. 4, 5, 10, 11.) must be obvious to men of ordinary Sence, and not onely to Speculators; as also, that Objects of the Senses may be of two sorts; Of the the first are things in Nature, or else simple vulgar actions and plain matters of Fact; which, if oft repeated and familiariz'd, are unmistakable; and consequently the perceiver inerrable in such

a matter; Of the second are such actions as are compounded and made up of an innumerable multitude of several particularities to be observed, every of which may be mistaken apart, each being a distinct little action in its single self; Such as is the transcribing a whole book, consisting of such myriads of words, single Letters, and Tittles, or Stops, and the several actions of writing over each of these so short and cursory, that it prevents diligence and exceeds human care to keep awake and apply distinct attentions to every of these distinct actions. And yet, to do our Opposers right, I doubt not but each of these failings may possibly be provided against by oft-repeated Corrections of many sedulous and sober examiners set apart for that business, and that the truth of the Letter of an whole Book might to a very great degree, if not altogether be ascertain'd to us, were the Examiners of each Copy known to be very numerous, prudent and honest, and each of them testifying his single examination of it word by word; For then the difficulty, consisting in the multiplicity and the variety, is provided against by the multitude of the preserving Causes; and their multifariousness made convictive to us by their well-testify'd consent.

5. To apply this discourse to the matter in hand. If we were Certain there had been anciently a multitude of Examiners of the Scripture's Letter in each Copy taken from the first

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Original or the next Copies from these and so forwards, with the exact care we have defin'd, the single Examinations of each and the amendment of the Copy according to their Examinations convincingly testify'd, and that by Excommunication or heavy Ecclesiastical Prohibitions and Mulcts it had been provided for from the beginning that none should presume to take a Copy of it, and that Copy be permitted to be read or seen till it were thus examined; much might have been said for the Certainty of the Scripture's Letter upon these men's Principles: But, if no such Orders or Exactness was ever heard of, especially of the New Testament upon the Truth of whose Letter they build Christian Faith; If the multitudes of Letters, Commaes, blottings or illegibleness of the Originals, like-appearance of Letters and even whole Words in in the Book, like-sounding in the ear or fancy of the Transcriber, possibility of misplacing, omitting, inserting, *&c.* did administer very fruitful occasions to human oversight; If, the more Copies were taken, the more the errours were like to grow, and the farther from correcting; If Experience testifies no such exact diligence has been formerly us'd, by the diverse Readings of several Copies now extant, and thousands of Corrections which have lately been made of the Vulgar Edition, the most universally currant perhaps of any other; what can we say but that (for any thing these Principles afford) Scripture's

Letter may be uncertain in every tittle, notwithstanding the diligence which has *de facto* been used to preserve it uncorrupted in the way of those who hold it the onely Rule of Faith? *In their way*, I say, who will not have the Sence of Christ's Doctrine writ in Christians hearts the Rule for the Correcters of the Letter to guide themselves by, but the meer Letter of a former (and God knows, controvertible) Copy, out of which the Transcription and by which onely the Examination is made. What Certainty accrues to Scripture's Letter by the means of Tradition, or the living voice of the present Church in each Age, is the Subject of another enquiry.

6. Now, as for the *Certainty* of the Scripture's *Significativeness*, which is the other Branch, nothing is more evident than that this is quite lost to all in the Uncertainty of the Letter; and 'tis evident that 'tis unattainable by the vulgar, that is the better half of mankind, since they are unfurnisht of those Arts and Skills, as Languages, Grammar, Logick, History, Metaphysicks, Divinity &c. requisit to establish and render certain the sence they conceive the Letter ought to bear; without which they can never make such an Interpretation of it but an acute Scholler skill'd in those means will be able to blunder theirs, and make a seeming clearer one of his own. In a word, if we see eminent Wits of the Protestants and the Socinians, making use of the self-same, and, as they conceive, the best advantages

tages the Letter gives them, as comparing places and such like, and availing themselves the best they can by acquir'd skills, yet differ in so main points as those of the B. Trinity and Christ's Divinity; what Certainty can we undertakingly promise to weaker heads, that is, to the Generality of Mankind, less able to make such fit allusions of places to one another; incapable of such means as should help them, which the other had and are very pertinent and proper to work upon the Letter; And, lastly, who are, for want of those, unfurnish't of any steady Principles to settle their Judgements and rationally determin their own Interpretation Certain. Scripture's Letter therefore is not *Certain in it's self*, that is, has no immovably secure Grounds enabling it to perform the Office of the Rule of Faith, or to guide Mankind in their way to Faith with a rational assuredness.

Our Conclusion then is this, that SCRIPTURE'S LETTER WANTS ALL THE FORE-MENTIONED PROPERTIES BELONGING TO THE RULE OF FAITH.

7. Lest any should misconstrue my former Discourse, I declare here once more that, in a great part of it, I argue *ad hominem*; that is, I manifest what must follow out of the Princi-

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ples of those who hold the Scriptures Letter the *Rule of Faith*, not out of my own or Catholick ones. I declare likewise that I with all reverence acknowledge such Excellencies in those Sacred Oracles as would task the tongues both of Men and Angels to lay them forth. I onely contest that the Scripture's Letter is most improper and never intended for the *Rule of Faith*; as is easy to be evinc't against an unobstinate Adversary by this, that 'tis known the Apostles and their Successors went not with Books in their hands to preach and deliver Christ's Doctrin, but Words in their mouths; and that Primitive Antiquity learn't their Faith by another Method a long time before many of those Books were universally spread amongst the vulgar, much less the Catalogue collected and acknowledg'd; till the Revolters from that Method and Rule, being manifestly convinc't of Novelty by it, were forc't to invent some other, and chose this of the Scripture's Letter for most plausible, as being held very Sacred: untill, by straining it to an undue use, and, to please the people, putting it without any distinction of the person, into their hands, and leaving it to their Interpretation, they have brought it (as 'tis made use of for a Rule of Faith) to the vilest degree of contempt; every silly upstart Heresy fathering it self upon It. Of which no Nation in the world is so evident an Instance as our miserable Country, distracted into so many Sects (all issuing from that Principle,) so impossible

possible to be brought under Ecclesiastical Government (and even with much ado under Temporal) that 'tis wonderful such proper Effects, especially so sensible, burthensome, so universally spred, and so continual, should not long ago have abundantly demonstrated their Proper Cause, and oblig'd them to renounce that Principle which is the necessary Parent of such ruinous and unredressable disorders

FIFTH DISCOURSE.

Showing the Notion of TRADITION, *and that all the Properties of the* Rule of Faith *do clearly agree to It.*

1. HAving then quite lost our labour in our last search, let us see whether we shall have better success in this second Enquiry; which is, whether we may hope to find the Properties of the Rule of Faith meet in that which we call *oral* or *Practical Tradition*. By which we mean a Delivery down from hand to hand (by words, and a constant course of frequent and visible Actions conformable to those Words) of the Sence and Faith of Forefathers.

2. But, to make a more express conceit of *Tradition*, that so we may more perfectly understand

derſtand the Nature of that which we treat o
let us firſt ſoberly reflect on the manner ho
Children learn their own and others names wi
whom they live, as alſo of the rooms and thin
they converſe with; afterwards, growing up, t
exerciſe their trades, to write, read, or uſe civ
or legal carriage to every one in their kinds
And, looking into the Thing we ſhall obſerv
that they firſt glean'd notions of thoſe ſeveral Ob
jects, either meerly through Impreſſions on the
Senſes by the Thing it ſelf alone, or by the hel
of having them pointed at, or ſomething practic
about them at the ſame time they were nam'd
and afterwards learnt to repeat the ſame Word
after others, more and more intelligently by de
grees, and to practice the ſame Actions; till a
length the former Generation of Teachers de
caying by the courſe of Nature, a new one i
ſprung up to Perfection, furniſh't with all th
accompliſhments of the former, and continuin
the ſame natural and Civil Knowledges, Action
and Conveniences to this Age which the forme
enjoy'd; and ſo forwards to ſucceeding Generati
ons by a natural kind of method, without needin
Books or new Skills meerly to perform this Effe
of continuing and preſerving the former Age, a
it were, alive in this. Add now to this that thi
Continuation goes not by long leaps from Age t
Age, or from twenty years to twenty, but from
year to year, nay moneth to moneth, & even leſs
according as the new Off-ſpring grows up by de
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grees to a Capacity of understanding and practicing; and then reflect on this whole Course, and we shall see the true nature of *Tradition* or immediate Delivery, as exercis'd in Civil matters and Human Conveniences.

3. We want nothing now but to apply this self-same Method to Spiritual or Ecclesiastical affairs, and to reflect how it brings down Faith by Doctrin couch't in Words and expresst in conformable Practices; and then we shall have gain'd a compleat and proper notion of *Faith-Tradition*, which is the Tradition we speak of.

4. We may observe then that the Children of Christians first hear the Sounds, afterwards by degrees get dim notions of God, Christ, Saviour, Heaven, Hell, Virtue, Vice, and such like; and, according as their capacity increases, are put on to practice what they have heard, and made to do some external Actions by precept and Example; which Actions by their more particularizing nature ripen to a more express and familiar conceit those raw Apprehensions or Judgments which while they stood under bare words look't as if they hover'd in the Ayr, and afar off. They are deterr'd from sins, first from lying and disobeying their Parents, afterwards others, by reproaches and punishments, and encourag'd to virtuous actions by rewards such as their Age bears, to breed in them a conceit of the badness of sin and goodness of Virtue: They are shown how to say

Grace,

Grace, say their Prayers, and made do it when they are able; and to gain them some abstracted conceit of those Actions, they are inur'd even while very Infants by certain carriages unusual at other times, as holding up their hands or perhaps eyes, kneeling, keeping silence and other sober postures, to look upon such actions as extraordinary ones, when as yet they know no more of them; which breeds a certain awe in them before-hand, preparing their minds to more reverence for the future. Afterwards, growing up, they come acquainted with the Creed, the ten Commandments, the Sacraments, some common forms of Prayer and other Practices of Christianity, and are directed to order their lives accordingly; the Actions or Carriage of the circumstant Church and Elder Faithful guiding the Younger (notwithstanding the difficulty of the yet undigested *Metaphor*, in which dialect Faith is deliver'd) to frame their lives to several sorts of Virtues by the doctrine deliver'd in words; as Faith, Hope, Charity, Prayer, Adoration, *&c.* and the concomitant or subservient Virtues to these; and the more intelligent, whose Understandings are clear'd by Study and the circumstance of conversing with the learneder sort of Fore-fathers, to do out of Knowledge and Reflexion, what others do (as it were) naturally, and by meer Belief or guidance of others. And this goes on by insensible degrees, till at last the Teachers die, and leave in their

room a new Swarm of the ſame nature with themſelves as to Chriſtian Life; that is, *practiſing* the ſame external Actions which determin to a certain degree the ſence of the Words they have been inur'd to; and (ſince the practice of thoſe Actions was inſtill'd from their Infancy, and ſerious) *holding* conſequently the Principles of thoſe Actions; that is, the ſame Points of Faith with the former Age. And this goes on not by leaps from an hundred years to an hundred, or from twenty to twenty, but by half-years to half-years, nay moneths to moneths, and even leſs; according as the young brood of Eaglets, made to ſee the Sun in his full Glory, grow up to a capacity of having their tender eyes acquainted firſt with the dawning, afterwards with the common day-light of Chriſtian Doctrin.

5. If any ſhould be ſo dull as to think this looks like a Speculation onely, and not to ſee plainly that 'tis confirm'd by ten thouſand Experements every day; I deſire them to conſider how the Primitive Faithful were inur'd to Chriſtianity ere the Books of Scripture were writ or communicated; or how themſelves (though Proteſtants or Presbyterians) were firſt imbu'd with Chriſtian Principles ere they could read, and they ſhall finde it was meerly by this way of Tradition: Nay more, I dare affirm that the very Presbyterians, much more the Proteſtants, ſtill adhere to their Faith, becauſe their Parents

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& Pastors taught them it when they were young, and not upon the Evidence of Scripture's Letter to their own private Judgement: which is manifest by this, that those who are brought up under Mr *Baxter* are apt to follow him, others Mr *Pierce*, and all in general hold fixedly to the doctrin of others, especially if their Parents be of the same persuasion. So hard it is to beat down Nature by Designe, or not to follow Tradition in practice, though at the same time they write and talk never so vehemently and loud against it. Nay 'tis easie to remark that those who were brought up Protestants, while they follow'd their Teachers and Forefathers in the Traditionary way, continu'd firmly such; and that none declin'd from that Profession until they began to use their own private Judgments in interpreting Scripture; and that then they ran by whole shoals into innumerable other Sects. However then they exclaim against Tradition, yet 'tis evident they owe to It all the Union and Strength they have, and to the renouncing It all their Distractions and Weakness.

6. What is said hitherto, is onely to explain the Nature of *Tradition* perfectly, and to settle a right conceit of it: which done, many Objections will be render'd unnecessary either to be answer'd or mention'd, as those that proceed against a kind of Prophetical *Afflatus*, which can have no force against our way, building upon perfect Evidence of our best Senses: but

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especially those which take so wrong an aym, that they dispute against *res traditæ*, or the things deliver'd, instead of Tradition it self, and thereupon accuse us for holding Human *Traditions*, or things invented by men for Faith. Whereas, when we speak of the *Rule of Faith*, we mean by the word *Tradition* onely the *Method* of publickly delivering and conveying down Tenets, held to have come from Christ, in the manner before declared. This note premised to avoid mistake and keep the Reader's mind more steady to the matter in hand, let us see now whether *Tradition* have in it the nature of a *Rule of Faith*; which is done by examining whether the fore-named Properties belong to it or no.

7. And first, 'tis already manifest from what is said, that the First Property of the Rule of Faith, namely, that it must be *Evident to all as to its Existence*, absolutely agrees with Tradition. For, *Tradition* being the open conveyance down of *Practical Doctrines* by our best senses of Discipline, that is, our Eyes and Ears; and this by Sounds daily heard and Actions daily seen and even felt; 'tis as easily appliable to all sorts, or Evident to them as to its Existence, as it is to see and hear: So that it can be insinuated into or affect not onely the rudest vulgar and little Children, but in some degree even very Babes, as was shown.

8. The second Condition, which is that its Ruling Power should be easily Evidenceable to any

any Enquirer is thus ſhown to agree to Tradition. Let the rudeſt Doubter come and deſire to be certify'd that Tradition is a Rule able if follow'd, to convey down Chriſt's doctrin to our very daies; or to the world's end; and let theſe plain Interrogatories be put to him. Suppoſe all Proteſtants in *England* were ſettled in an unanimous Profeſſion of their Faith, and that their Children without looking farther ſhould believe and practice as their Fathers had brought them up, would it not follow in ſelf-evident terms that thoſe Children while they followed this method would be Proteſtants too? Suppoſe theſe, now grown men under thoſe Parents, ſhould have children too of their own who ſhould behave themſelves in the ſame manner towards their Fathers by believing and practiſing as they taught them, without looking any farther, would it not be equally evident they would ſtill be Proteſtants alſo? Since to believe and practice thus is to be a Proteſtant; and, would not this method if followed carry on that doctrin ſtill forwards from Generation to Generation to the very end of the world? 'Tis then moſt eaſily evidenceable to the rudeſt capacity that, this immediate delivery of Tradition, as above explicated, is a certain way of deriving down Chriſts Doctrin while the world ſhall laſt. This Property therefore of the Rule of Faith is found evidently to agree to Tradition.

9. The third Condition, which is that the Rule

Rule of Faith must be apt to justify unreflecting and unredoubting persons that they proceed rationally while they rely on it, is found most exactly in Tradition. For the common course of human conversation makes it a madness not to believe great multitudes of Knowers, if no possible consideration can awaken in our reason a doubt that they conspire to deceive us. Now in the way of Tradition all deliverers or immediate Forefathers are Knowers, as appears in those who immediately heard the Apostles; all the Knowledge requisit being of what they were taught, and practic't accordingly all their lives; of which 'tis impossible the rudest person should be ignorant, who ever had any Effect of such a Teaching wrought upon him. Nor can any, unless their brains rove wildly or be unsettled even to the degree of madness, suspect deceit where such multitudes unanimously agree in a matter of fact, look seriously when they speak, act themselves and practice accordingly, and show in the whole course of their carriage that they hope to be sav'd themselves, and to save others whom they thus instruct, by relying on this Truth that their Forefathers thus taught them; which amounts to this, that Nature or common Reason at unawares steals into them a solid apprehension that Tradition is of a *certain* kind of Nature; and so, that, while Fathers thus taught Children, it was ever such, that is, that Tradition is a certain Rule of conveying down Faith, which is all we

ſtudy to evince at preſent. I may add that, Nature telling them by their own experiences, that Parents generally would be apt to teach their Children what themſelves had been taught and believ'd to be good, and true, & needfull to their eternal Salvation, their natural thoughts would lead them by a downright procedure, to judge that *Tradition* was ever in ſome conſiderable Body of Deliverers who ſtuck to it and own'd it; and that thoſe had true Faith, or truly that doctrine which Chriſt and the firſt Planters of Chriſtianity taught. But of this point more hereafter.

10. If it be objected that this multitude of plain honeſt-meaning Souls are as much juſtify'd for believing Scripture. I anſwer, that if you mean their *Faith* conceiv'd to be found in Scripture, or a *determinate Sence* of Scripture's Letter, it cannot with any ſhow of reaſon be pretended that they are as much juſtifiable for believing any, ſetting aſide Tradition's help; for, without this it totally depends on the inward Judgments, Fancies or Skills of men which they are unqualify'd to judge of; not on open verdict of Senſes, to wield the Certainty or Uncertainty of which lies clearly within the reach of their common reaſon. And as for Scripture's Letter they cannot poſſibly be juſtify'd in reaſon for believing even the Subſtantial Truth of it without Tradition's aſſiſting hand and preſerving care. And the reaſon is the ſame; becauſe the common courſe of human Experience tells them that

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Judgments or Opinions often disagree, but their plain Sensations (especially if frequently repeated) never; Whence a Jury of the plainest High-shoes would, upon the Evidence of the sight of six Witnesses, without more ado condemn a Malefactor; but not upon the Judgments of a thousand men, if a Testimony grounded on Sense were not brought. Now take away Tradition and all ground from *Certain Sence* fails us, either for the meaning or even Letter of Scripture; and all is left to men's Judgments built on latent Skills or Fancy, or at least on Sense liable to great and numerous mistakes, as hath been shown, (*Disc.* 4. §. 3.) Again, seeing every one apprehends the most vulgar have reason enough to believe there was such a one as K. *James* and Q. *Elizabeth*, of which they are no otherwise ascertain'd but by Tradition; why are not they as much or more justify'd for believing points of Faith received down by the same tenour? whereas if you go about to pump their common Reason about the Authority of the Statute-Book or the Truth of its Letter, you shall find them blunder and at a loss, being pos'd beyond their sphere of meer Nature by a question entrenching upon skill, to which they can never answer with a steady assuredness inwardly; and, if they do so outwardly, 'tis manifest that some Passion and not their Reason breeds that irrational Profession. The third Condition then of the Rule of Faith,

which was *to be apt to ſettle and juſtify unreflecting and undoubting vulgar*, is manifeſtly found agreeing to *Tradition*.

11. I put next the 6th. Condition, becauſe the proof of it evidently proves the fourth, fifth and ſeventh; For, what is built on immovable Grounds or Certain in its ſelf, has in it where with to ſettle and ſatisfy the moſt piercing Wit convince the moſt obſtinate Adverſaries, and t aſcertain us abſolutely. To prove that Traditio has Certain and Infallible Grounds it may ſuffic to note, that, (*Diſc.* 1. §. 13, 14, 15.) it being evi dently proved Faith muſt be Infallible to us, an no leſs evident that it cannot be ſuch without ha ving Infallibly-certain Grounds, (ſince nothin can be firmer to us than the ground it ſtands on now the Rule of Faith is its Ground; It follow evidently that This muſt likewiſe be Infallibl certain. There being then onely two Groun or Rules of Faith owned; namely, Deliver of it down by *Writing*, and by Words an Practice, which we call *Oral* and *Practical Tr dition*, 'tis left unavoydably, out of the impo ſibility that Scripture ſhould be Infallible as Rule, that Tradition muſt be ſuch.

12. Though this Concluſion, ſuppoſing th Truth of the Propoſitions I aſſume as alread prov'd, be ſufficiently conſequent to thoſe Ad verſaries againſt whom I conteſt at preſent th Certainty of Tradition, in regard they do n ſtick to grant that either *Scripture* or *Traditi*

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must be the Rule of Faith; Yet I foresee more will be expected from a pretender to demonstrate its Certainty, and that he should frame his Discourse from intrinsecal *Mediums*. Reflecting then on the nature of Tradition as before explicated, we shall observe that it hath for its Basis the best Nature in the Universe, that is, Man's, the Flower and End of all the rest; and this, not according to his Moral part, defectible by reason of Original Corruption; nor yet his Intellectuals, darkly groping in the pursuit of Science by *reflected*-thoughts or Speculation, amidst the misty vapours exhal'd by his Passion predominant over his rational Will; but according to those faculties in him perfectly and necessarily subject to the operations and stroaks of Nature; that is, his Eyes, Ears, handling, and the *direct* Impressions of Knowledge, as naturally and necessarily issuing from the affecting those Senses, as it is to feel heat, cold, Pain, Pleasure, or any other material Quality. Again, those Impressions upon the Sense are not made once but frequently; and, in most, many times every day. Moreover, to make these more express and apt to be taken notice of, their lives are to be fram'd by the Precepts they hear and conformable Examples they see; so that Faith (I mean the substance of it, or that solid plain Knowledge as far as 'tis apt to cause downright Christian Faith) comes clad in such plain matters of Fact that the most

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ſtupid man living cannot poſſibly be ignorant of it. Compare next the certainty each Chriſtian Forefather has of what he has practic't all his life with that which a ſworn Witneſs in a Court has of what he ſaw or heard but once; which done, multiply these thus-qualify'd Witneſſes till you equal the vaſt total of Chriſtianity, and then invent what force in Nature's Univerſe is comparable to this Inerrability of Tradition. And, if clear Reaſon evinces to you that 'tis far more poſſible to make a man not be than not to know what is rivetted into his Soul by ſo-oft-repeated Senſations; nay if it exceed all the power of Nature (abſtracting from the caſes of Madneſs and violent diſeaſe) to blot Knowledge thus fixt out of the Soul of one ſingle Believer; then 'tis as clearly evinc't that ſooner may all Mankind periſh than the regulative virtue of Tradition miſcarry: Nay, ſooner may the ſinows of entire Nature by overſtraining crack, and ſhe loſe all her activity and motion, that is, her ſelf, than one ſingle part of that innumerable multitude which integrate that vaſt Teſtification we call *Tradition* can poſſibly be violated. The virtue then, by which Tradition regulates her followers to bring down Faith unerringly, is grounded on a far ſtronger Baſis than all material Nature; that is, on ſuch a one as was fitting for Supream Wiſdom to lay for *Faith*, being ſo neer and neceſſary a means to bring Mankind to his Beatitude, which was the end of all this cor-

corporeal Architecture. *Its Followers*, I say; for I onely conteſt in this preſent part of my Diſcourſe that Tradition, if follow'd, is of ſuch a Nature: whether it was alwayes thus follow'd or no belongs to another Enquiry.

13. Nor muſt I neglect the reminding in this place what was produc't before (§. 8.) to ſhow the Evidenceableneſs of Tradition's Ruling Power to the rudeſt Enquirers; It being as Evident that while the next Age believes and practices as the former Age held and practic't (that is, while the Rule of Tradition is follow'd) thoſe of the later Age are ſtill of the ſame Faith with the former, as it is that *to believe the ſame is to believe the ſame.* Onely I am forbidden by my Reaſon and Logick to call this a Proof or Argument, becauſe 'tis of the Nature of that firſt Principle *Idem eſt idem ſibijpſi*, and onely an Inſtance or Particular of it, as theſe Propoſitions are, *a ſtone is a ſtone*, *a man is a man*; in which the two Terms are as neerly laid and as faſt connected as perfect Identity can ciment them; that is, ſo cloſe that no *medium* can come between to make them capable of being argu'd or prov'd; that is, 'tis *ſelf-evident*: and ſo I had no more to do but by opening the Terms to explicate the Propoſition; which done it was evident beyond proof.

14. Let now the moſt rational Doubter or moſt Sceptical Diſſenter muſter all the Caprichoes of Fancy Invention can ſuggeſt, and the

ſubtleſt quirks ingeniouſly miſus'd Logick and abus'd-into-Sophiſtry can furniſh them with; Let the moſt obſtinate and acute Adverſaries of Faith whet their wits to that degree of ſharpneſs as to be able to penetrate with nice diſtinctions between the ſides of two notions, if in the leaſt diſagreeing, (that is, onely metaphyſically diviſible,) and lay open their difference; what can they ſay in this caſe? If they will argue againſt Tradition, it muſt be out of ſome *Knowledges*; but Knowledge is taken from *Things*, and the beſt Thing in this univerſe, to wit, Man's Nature in what he is unalterable, is engag'd for the Certainty of Tradition. But indeed, their proper task will be to find a ſolution for, or to looſe thoſe two notions which perfect Identity binds, and to blunder that Truth which the noon-day-Sun of *Self-evidence* diſcovers, and (as it were) writes with its moſt lightſome and moſt conſpicuous rayes.

15. Theſe four laſt Conditions then of the Rule of Faith moſt fully agree with Tradition as well as the three firſt, that is, 'tis Self-evident to all as to it's Exiſtence, §. 7. and Evidenceable as to it's Ruling Power to any vulgar Enquirer, §. 8. apt to ſettle and juſtify undoubting perſons, §. 9, 10. to ſatisfy fully the moſt Sceptical diſſenters and moſt rational doubters, and to convince the moſt obſtinate and acute Adverſaries, built upon unmoveable Grounds, that is, Certain in it's ſelf and abſolutely

lutely aſcertainable to us, §. 11, 12, 13, 14. And theſe Properties ſpringing out of the very nature of the Rule of Faith, and being incompetent to any Competitor or pretended Rule, as has been ſhown, this main Concluſion is made good, that

TRADITION IS THE RULE OF FAITH.

SIXTH DISCOURSE.

Endeavouring to demonſtrate à priori *the Indefectibleneſs of Tradition.*

1. ALl this is well, may ſome ſay, in caſe Tradition had been ever held to; for then indeed Faith had come down by ſuch an incomparable Teſtification that the like was never heard of. But how know we who began to deſert that Rule, and who ever held to it; or that it was ever held to by any?

2. Now, though the carriage of Proteſtants makes this labour needleſs, while I write againſt them; yet I owe to my former diſcourſe a clearing of this likewiſe. Their *Carriage*, I ſay; For, when it is prov'd evidently that Tradition is a certain Rule and Scripture's Letter not ſuch, they who reject the former to adhere to the later are clearly caſt in their Cauſe and condemn'd without

out more ado. Indeed, If Proteſtants faulted not the Rule but onely pretended that men had fail'd it, they might yet delude the world with ſome colour that they had ever held to the doctrin of Anceſtours, and onely deſerted us becauſe we had deſerted Anceſtours formerly; but if they put the fault in the Rule it ſelf, write againſt it, diſgrace it and recurr to another, 'tis a certain ſign of ſelf-condemnation, and that they judge in their inmoſt thoughts that Tradition or immediate delivery ever ſtood our Friend and would overthrow them. Nay, did they think they could manifeſt ſatisfactorily that we had deſerted formerly the Faith of our Foreſathers as they pretend, they had no more efficacious way to ruine us than to oppoſe us upon thoſe Principles laid in this former Diſcourſe; ſince Tradition, a little after the Primitive times, at which time they pretend we fell, had not gone down many ſteps, and ſo the Renouncers of it would in reaſon ſeem to them more eaſily diſcoverable by its vicinity to the Apoſtles. Beſides, this Rule being ſo own'd and ſtuck to by us it had been the moſt efficacious way *ad hominem* to confute and ſhame us even by our own Principles. Wherefore it is moſt evident they think it not their beſt play to offer to avail themſelves by Tradition, knowing 'twill be their diſadvantage and our gain; that is, they in effect tacitly yield that (if Tradition be a Certain Rule, which we have ſhown ſelf-evident) the doctrin held

held by our Church to be of Faith came down uninterruptedly from the Apoſtles, that is, was ever, or is Chriſt's doctrin, however, they blind their own Conſciences with glances of Fancy from private Interpretations of God's word, and deaf their own and others ears with empty ſounds rebounding witth falſe Ecchoes from thoſe Sacred Oracles.

3. Now, though it ſeem an unreaſonable expectation to require that a Rule ſhould not onely be able to rule thoſe who *would* follow it, but alſo ſhould have power to *oblige* the generality of thoſe who actually do follow it not to deſert it; yet, ſuch is the Goodneſs of our Saviour towards his Church to order that the Rule which brings down Faith to us ſhould, both out of the Nature of Man in which it is grafted, and much more by means of the doctrin it recommends, be of ſo wonderful an Efficacy.

4. This point therefore of the actual Indefectiveneſs of Tradition I ſhall endeavour to demonſtrate both *à priori* from proper Cauſes, and *à poſteriori* from a now-adayes experienc't Effect.

5. To do the former, I ſay for my Grounds, Firſt, that Chriſtian doctrin was at firſt unanimouſly ſettled by the Apoſtles in the hearts of the Faithful diſperſt in great multitudes over ſeveral parts of the world. Secondly, that this doctrin was firmly believed by all thoſe Faithful to be the way to Heaven, and the contradicting

dicting or deserting it the way to damnation; so that the greatest *Hopes* and *Fears* imaginable were by engaging the Divine Authority strongly apply'd to the Minds of the First Believers, encouraging them to the adhering to that doctrin, and deterring them from relinquishing it; and indeed infinitly greater than any other whatever springing from any temporal consideration; and that this was in all Ages the perswasion of the Faithful. Thirdly, that Hopes of Goods and Fears of Harms strongly apply'd are the Causes of Actual Will. Lastly, that the thing was feisible or within their power, that is, that what they were bred to was Knowable by them. This put, it follows as certainly that a great number or Body of the first Believers and after-Faithful in each Age, that is from Age to Age, would continue to hold themselves and teach their Children as themselves had been taught, that is, would follow and stick to Tradition, as it does that a Cause put actually causing produces it's Effect. *Actually*, I say; For, since the Cause is put, the Application put, and the Patient dispos'd (for our Argument puts this to be the Minds of true Believers, in regard the first Renouncers of Tradition must have been *True Believers* or Holders of it ere they renounc't it) it follows inevitably that the Cause is put still *actually causing*.

6. I foresee some will object the Indisposition of the Wills of the Believing Parents by rea-

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ſon of original Corruption. But, ſuppoſing I diſpute againſt thoſe Chriſtians who hold that Chriſt's Doctrin was intended to be an Antidote for that Original malice, and to keep Men's Wills (already poſſeſt with it) right, notwithſtanding the poize of their corrupted Nature and the temptations of their circumſtances; to ſay 'tis apply'd univerſally to all ſeveral ſorts and tempers, and preſerves none good, is to queſtion Chriſt's Wiſdom, and to doubt whether it be fit to do the Effect it was meant for. Not to mind the Objecter how many thouſands of Martyrs and Holy Confeſſors, by the Power of this Doctrin, overcame this inbred declivity of their Wills and its diſorderly inclinations to the deareſt Goods Life or Nature could beſtow. A great part therefore would be virtuous, and ſo (it being eaſie and obvious, as our former Diſcourſe proved) would teach their Children what themſelves believ'd in their Conſciences to be Chriſt's Doctrine, or the doctrine they had been taught; and ſo a Body of Traditionary Chriſtians would ſtill be continu'd to the very End of the World; nor could that Rule be totally relinquiſht by any Stratagem of the Devil or prevail'd againſt *by the gates of Hell.* Again, though Nature incline men to ſin or vicious Appetites, yet can it incline them all to this ſort of ſin, that is, to teach their Children what they think will damn them? Or rather does not Nature moſt ſtrongly carry them to the contrary?

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Their Original corruption then is no particular inviter to this kind of ſin, to teach their Children pernicious falſhoods, and which themſelves hold ſuch; though themſelves be otherwiſe liable to ſeveral ſort of particular failings.

7. If any object the fickle nature of the Will, and imagin that this exempts her from the Laws of Cauſes; I ask them (without engaging farther into School-diſputes, which I induſtriouſly avoid) whether *Good* be not the proper Object of the *Will*, and ſo is to affect it when ſufficiently apply'd or propos'd? If ſo, then, ſince an Object to affect a Power is to put it *in act*, and the Act of the Power we call the Will is actual Volition or Willing, Good propos'd makes the Will to will or deſire that Good, and conſequently the known means to obtain it; Now, Infinit Goods and Harms ſufficiently propos'd are of their own nature incomparably more powerful Cauſes to carry the Will, than Temporal ones. Since then, when two Cauſes are counterpos'd, the leſſer, when it comes to execution, is no Cauſe, as to the ſubſtance of that Effect (as a heavy weight, which were otherwiſe a cauſe of deſcending, is no ſuch Cauſe when overweigh'd by an heavier, as not making its ſcale deſcend at all) it follows that there is no Cauſe to move the Wills of a World of Believers to be willing to do that which they judge would loſe themſelves and their Poſterity Infinit Goods and bring them Infinit Harms, ſuch ſtrong and main

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Hopes and Fears being put in the counter-ballance, in case a sufficient *Proposal* or *Application* be not wanting.

8. The last Attempt then of an Objectour is to fault the *Application* of Spiritual and Heavenly Goods, and to enhance the Proposals of sensible and Temporal Objects. But, if we reflect with how steady a pursuit and even equal to that of eye-sight or any other Sense, we generally work for Ends no otherwise propos'd than by undoubted Authority; as when a King prepares for an Expedition against a forrain Country he never saw, or a Gentleman for a journey to *Rome* and such like; If we but call to mind how the greatest Testimony in the world engages God's supremely-Infallible Veracity for the truth of the Doctrin it proposes, which ascertains us of those Infinit Goods and Harms spoken of; the best Application of a motive to a truly rational power which can possibly be imagin'd; If we but consider how those spiritual and unseen Goods are made Intelligible to all, in a fair measure, by most fit and obvious Metaphors; Familiar and Sensible, by daily practice and as it were Experience of them in Christian Language and Actions, by the venerable Sacraments, by the spectable Majesty of outward Ceremonies, all including our spiritual last End, or intimating it by their order to it; nay, if we but contemplate even Essential Heaven it self made the Object of our Senses, to comply with

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our weakneſs, by the *Word's being made Fleſh and dwelling amongſt us*, his being born, his ſuffering cold, hunger, perſecution, baniſhment and other inconveniencies in his Life; his curing our diſeaſed, comforting our afflicted, raiſing our dead, and other miraculous actions; his being bound, buffetted, ſcourged, crown'd with thorns, and laſtly crucify'd; and all this believed to be for our ſakes; all of them Objects moſt ſenſibly and palpably affecting our Underſtandings and thence ſliding movingly (and this by their ſenſible nature) into our very Wills; we ſhall diſcover that the Infinit Spiritual Good we ſpoke of is become through the Provident Goodneſs of our God, both as eaſily appliable as the moſt viſible and concerning civil Actions working on the beſt Senſations of our Foreſathers, the beſt and ampleſt Authority in the world to make their Senſations ours, and the whole courſe of our Life, Actions, Sacraments, and all other outward ſhows which could be invented to make ſuch myſteries maniable, can poſſibly render them; and that, if after all this they can be conceiv'd to want any thing of the Senſibleneſs, 'tis abundantly ſupply'd by that deep Impreſſion which the Sacred Horrour of the Reverence given to them makes, and the efficacious wayes to excite and and preſerve that Reverence. All which wayes and objects, thus eaſily and ſtrongly appliable were frequently and efficaciouſly apply'd by the education of Parents

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and by the Discipline and Oeconomy of the Church, which brings those speculations to practice, was ever, and must needs reach the Generality. In a word, Christianity, urg'd to execution, gives its Followers a *new Life* and a *new Nature*; than which a nearer Application cannot be imagin'd. No *Application* therefore is wanting; Wherefore, the *Efficient* and the *Matter* being proper and fitted to one another, the *Effect* must still be or continue; that is the delivering down sincerely and carefully Christian Doctrin first received must still continue in some great multitude at least, and this to the end of the world.

SEVENTH DISCOURSE,

An Objection clear'd, and the Beginning and Progress of an HERESY *connaturally laid open.*

1. WHat onely and mainly seems to prejudice our Argument is, that there have actually been many Hereticks or Deserters of Tradition. To which I answer that 'tis not to be expected but some Contingency should have place where an whole *Species* in a manner is to be wrought upon. It sufficeth us that the Causes to preserve Faith indeficiently entire are as efficacious

cacious as those which are lay'd for the propagation of Mankind; The Virtue of *Faith* not being to continue longer than *Mankind*, its onely Subject, does: And they will easily appear as efficacious as the other if we consider the strength of those Causes before explicated, and reflect that they are effectively powerful to make multitudes daily debar themselves of those pleasures which are the Causes of Mankind's Propagation. And, if we look into History for Experience of what has past in the world since the first planting of Christianity, we shall find far more particulars failing in propagating their Kind than their Faith.

2. I know the multitudes of Heretieks which have from time to time risen makes this position seem incredible; wherefore, that we may at once both open Tradition and make good our Tenet, we will reflect how an *Heresy* is first bred. To inforce then our former Argument, we must look on Christ's Church not onely as on a Congregation having in their hearts those most powerful motives already spoken of, able of their own nature to carry each single heart possest by them, though left at its own liberty; but as of the perfectest form of a Commonwealth, having within her self Government and Officers appointed by Christ himself, and so look't upon by the Faithful, to take care all those motives be actually apply'd as much as may be to the subject Layity; and that all the Sons of the Church

be aw'd by wholsom disciplin to conform their lives according to the Doctrin they profess. Yet notwithstanding, as in the *Civil State*, maugre the Laws and care of Governours, it happens sometimes that some particular Person turns *Rebel* or Outlaw, and associates to himself others; so it happens sometimes in the Church, that, because 'tis impossible the perfection of Disciplin should extend it self in so vast a multitude to every particular, some one or few persons, by neglect of applying Christian motives to their Souls, fall into extravagancies of spiritual Pride, Ambition, Lust, or other vices; and itching with desire of followers to honour and support them, they first lay hold on some accidental miscarriages, as foolish opinions or ill lives of some in the Church, which they aggravate beyond all reason to justify their Rebellion, and then invent and propose new Tenets to others; which partly by their plausibleness, partly licentiousness, suting with the curious or passionate humour of diverse, if Governours be not vigilant and prudent, draw them into the same faction with themselves; especially, if they get the State on their sides, secure indemnity and hopes of reward draw the corrupt hearts of many to bandy with their fellow-revolters against the former Church. Thus a *Body* is made; inconsiderable in respect of the whole, which yet is engag'd by the natural care of self-preservation to make Head against it. The Church stands

upon the uninterrupted Succeſſion of her Doctrin from Chriſt, grounded on the noon-day manifeſtation of the moſt univerſal and clear Atteſtation in the world: The other's known newneſs makes it impoſſible to human nature (though moſt deprau'd) to pretend this reception from immediate Forefathers; the contrary being ſo evident to the whole world's eye-ſight that this were to tell an open ly to no imaginable purpoſe. They muſt cry therefore the Church has err'd in Faith, elſe they condemn themſelves; whence they are oblig'd at next to renounce and diſgrace Tradition or the living voice of the Church as unfit to be a Rule, which left in force would preſently quaſh and ſtrangle all their Attempts. After this a new Rule muſt be ſought for; either ſome private Inſpiration, or ſome waxen-natur d words not yet fenc't nor having any certain Interpreter, but fit to be plaid upon diverſly by quirks of wit; that is, apt to blunder and confound, but to clear little or nothing. Their Policy muſt be to ſtudy vapour in *wordiſh learning*, to be dextrous in *Criticiſms* and all that can conduce to the various acception of words; and then to hook Catholicks from their Infallible and Evident way of *Tradition*, to combat with them at their own weapon and in their own way: In which if the Catholick be ſo unwary or good-natur d as to engage, and having been inur d to more ſolid and ſober Grounds for his Faith, be not perhaps

haps so skilful in beating the air as his bird-witted Opponent, presently a Victory is proclaimed with the loudest Trumpet of Fame, and (vanity being generally their God who place their honour in such aiery sorts of learning) blaz'd up and down to the commendation of themselves and perversion of others. But a company which makes such a bustle cannot long want a Name; Wherefore, the Traditionary Christian having ever enjoyd the Appellation of *Catholick*, and it being impossible their Adversaries should by any design or craft alter the common Language of Mankind, hopeless to attain the name of *Catholick*, they are forced to content themselves (though unwilling) with some other new one; which, Nature, working upon their own comportment, determines to be either from their Authour, as *Lutherans*, *Zuinglians*; or their new Tenet, as *Tritheits*, *Sacramentarians*; or some combination amongst themselves, as *Protestants*; or, lastly, some particular carriage, as *Quakers*, *Dippers*, &c.

3. These first Adherents to the upstart Novellist being clung into a Body, after a while young understandings ripening to a capacity of Faith, things are presently alterd; The pretended Rule of Scripture's Letter's self-sufficiency is immediately thrown by as useless any farther; Design hath got its end already, and the natural way of of Tradition begins to take place again and re-

cover its self; nay the Reformers themselves are forc't to crave help of it to keep their company together. Children are taught that they are to believe their Pastours and Fathers; and, though they are permitted to read the Scripture when they come at age, yet they are told they are to guide themselves by the sence their Pastours and Fathers give it, which is that they ought to guide themselves by the Faith of their Parents and Teachers in interpreting Scripture; the very way Catholicks ever took in that particular: And, if any company of men though now mature to judge, presume to follow their own Judgement in interpreting it, and differ from those first Reformers, these if they get the power in their hands will presently fall to oblige them by force to *act*, that is (if they would have them do it conscientiously, which else were to force them to sin) to *hold* as they do, and persecute or punish them if they do not; whereas they guide themselves to their best capacity by the Scripture's Letter which is the very Rule of Faith their Persecutors taught them and made use of themselves when they broke from the Church. Which evidently shows that a new Rule is introduc't; and that it is not indeed the Letter of God's word which is now thought fit to guide the Readers of it to Faith, but those men's Interpretations of it. So that the breaking from Tradition and consequently the Church casts them most inevitably upon these self-contradictions,

ctions. First, to reform npon pretence of the Scripture's Letter being the Rule of Faith, yet afterwards in practice to desert that Rule in their carriage towards others. Secondly, to disallow to others those Grounds themselves proceed upon. Thirdly, to pretend first the Scripture's Letter *clear of it self* without needing the Church to interpret it, so to avoid condemnation from the former Church; yet afterwards, to judge the Followers of it to their best power to go wrong; that is, to confess it *obscure*, and to need their new Churches Interpretation. 4ly. To persecute others for taking that way, which they held (at least pretended) meritorious in themselves. 5ly. To oblige others to relinquish the sole guidance of the Scriptures Letter and to rule themselves by their Tradition; and yet at the same time when they write and dispute against Catholicks, to impugn Tradition or the doctrin of Forefathers as unfitting to sence it, and abet onely the self-sufficiency of Scriptures Letter. And, lastly, to impute that carriage to our Church as a fault which themselves practice upon their own Subjects: And, which is most material, our Church punishes none but such as desert the Rule she recommends; whereas they punish those under them for following too close that Rule which themselves recommended and applauded, as the whole and sole Basis of their Reformation.

4. Now, what can follow hence but that their Ecclesiastical Subjects whom Common Sence

cannot but make exceeding ſenſible of ſuch their unreaſonable carriage, in perſecuting them purely for following God's word or the Scripture's Letter to their beſt power, which themſelves had taught them *might* ſecurely, nay *ought* in conſcience be follow'd, let the Conſent of Forefathers and the preſent Church made up of meer men ſay what they would, what follows, I ſay, but that exaſperated beyond patience by this procedure which they will be apt to conceive to be a moſt ſenceleſs and ſelf-condemning tyranny over their Conſciences, they will (unleſs Governours be vigilant,) ſtrive to wreak their malice againſt their Perſecutors; and if they be numerous and powerful, endeavour to involve whole Nations in war and blood; which God of his mercy avert from our diſtracted Country. Of ſo main conſequence it is both for Church and State that men's Minds be right ſet in the Fundamental Grounds of Chriſtianity; and that the Principle they build Religion on be *Evident*, that is apt to nnite their Underſtaudings and by it their Affections; not uncertain and vertible, which muſt needs lead (if purſu'd by an earneſt zeal) to nothing but diverſities in Opinions about Faith, thence to diſſenſions and Feuds in the Will, which upon any great preſſure will be apt to break forth into actions of higheſt enmity; and by the irreconcileableneſs of ſuch Intereſts, (neither ſide being able to yeeld to the other in what each of rhem holds Sacred, Religious and

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Conſcientious) endleſs and fierceſt bickerings are apt to ſucceed, even to utter deſolation; as frequent Hiſtories too lamentably record. Not that I intend the Juſtification of thoſe revolting Sects, who having no certain Grounds of Controverſy are both ſelf-condemn'd by the common Light of Reaſon for diſobeying a Certain and Known Legal Authority (which God's Law and plain Reaſon commands them to ſubmit to) to maintain an Uncertainty, that is for any thing they know an Error; and, were it a known Truth they held, would be no leſs condemn'd by the Law of God and common Reaſon, nay out the nature of Religion it ſelf, for making Rebellion and an unimpower'd Sword the Defence of Truth which ſtands firm on a ſurer Baſis. I onely mind prudent Conſiderers on the by how much it conduces to State-Unity and Peace that the Principle of conveying Faith to us be built on *Senſible Evidence* acknowledgable by all Mankind, when rightly underſtood; and not left to giddy Interpretations of Private Fancies, which are apt to run ſo eccentrically to one another, that we can never expect they ſhall have any common point, where to fix and unite men's Minds and Affections.

5. The uſefulneſs of this Parergon ſerves to elucidate as it were practically and experimentally the Certainty of Tradition. The particular uſe we make of it in this preſent Diſcourſe, whence we digreſt into it, is to conclude (as well

as we can of things at a common view, which yet is no less certain) that the number of the actual Deserters of the natural way of Tradition have been but few, to wit the first Revolters, a small handfull compar'd to all Christianity besides, and onely occasionally not constantly happening that the Descendents of these Revolters were taught by them to believe Them in the right, in interpreting Scripture, and not their own Judgments; that is, follow'd the way of Tradition however misplac't: To which if we compare the numerous contingencies both in man's Nature and other circumstances, hindring Propagation, every day happening, we shall find much reason to prefer the multitudes of the other before this: But if we add to this Consideration the daily decay of innumerable particulars, upon whom the Continuation of Mankind depends, by natural or accidental deaths, and reflect on the innumerable new Subjects and even whole Nations into which Tradition hath and does daily propagate it self, and those uninfected by new Heresies for whole Ages, that is without any one Deserter of Tradition among them; and none of those beholding to Progenitors for their Faith but to Externs who converted them, whereas *Propagating their Kind* can onely be by those of the same race; We shall find that the Causes laid to propagate & preserve a Body of *Traditionary Christians* look far more steadily and less needing a recourse to any particular

cular Providence than those which we can discover laid for the keeping on Foot a Body of *Men*. Whence, if any (as the common fashion is) bring against the perpetuation of *Tradition* such wild-roving Arguments as would equally strike at the Certainty of perpetuating *Mankind*, or continuing any *Species* in Nature, the readiest answer is to show they do so; and then to tell them we intend not Tradition should last longer than the onely *Species* capable of Faith will; that is, longer than Mankind is to stand, who onely can have it or need it.

EIGHTH DISCOURSE.

Endeavouring to demonstrate à Posteriori *the Uninterruptedness of* Tradition *hitherto.*

1. HAving seen and weigh'd the strength of those Causes which preserve and continue Tradition on Foot, and thence endeavour'd to demonstrate its Indefectibleness as the proper and necessary Effects of those Causes; we will now begin our Discourse at the other end, and try if we can conclude the same from some Proper Effect; that is, from such an Effect as could onely have sprung from the *actual Indeficiency of Tradition* as its Cause: That so we may show the

the Certainty of Faith's Conveyance to us do
bly guarded, and on all sides Evident.

2 Though indeed this seems a needless ende
vour against the Protestant who yeilds that tho
points of Faith in which we agree came do
by this way of Tradition. Whence, he is t
be prest to answer candidly these Queres. W
not the Trinity, Incarnation and other points
which we agree held in all Ages since Christ b
God's Church? He must yeild it, no Protesta
ever denying it; besides that we both agree t
call that *God's Church* which held those ma
points of Faith. Next, he is to be askt, whethe
seeing those points were held ever of Faith, Fa
thers did not actually teach Children so, or th
former Age the later. Common reason wi
teach him they did; which devolves into thi
that a Protestant must confess those points cam
down by Tradition, and that Tradition hat
not fail'd to bring them down to us. Ask hi
next by what virtue Tradition perform'd this
and whether the same virtue were not powerfu
to bring down others as well as these had an
such been? And, when he assignes this virtue
I cannot suspect him negative in so plain a point.
Ask him farther; Is there not a necessary Con-
nexion and Relation between such a constan
Cause and its formal Effect? So that, if its for-
mal Effect be *Those Points received as delivered
ever*, the Proper Cause must be an *ever-delivery*,
whence, we can argue from such an Effect to its

Cause

Cauſe for *any* particular Point, and conſequenly for any Point that is in Controverſie between Them and Us, in caſe it be a Point we held ever-deliver'd: And if ſo, as manifeſt Reaſon evinces it, our now-held Faith was taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and our diſpute is at an end. But, becauſe I rather ſuſpect the Proteſtant ſeeing his Cauſe and Intereſt too deep engag'd and himſelf ſtreightned by ſuch ſtrict Connexion of Terms, will fly of and deny Tradition to be a *neceſſary Cauſe*, notwithſtanding its conſtant tenour of having wrought this its Effect millions of times, or from ſtep to ſtep during ſo many Ages, and will not care to alledge that all this is pure Chance and contingency, I ſhall purſue the Deſigne and Method I at firſt intended.

3. The Effect then we will pitch upon and avow to be the proper one of ſuch a Cauſe, is *The preſent perſwaſion of Traditionary-Chriſtians (or Catholicks,) that their Faith hath deſcended from Chriſt and his Apoſtles uninterruptedly*, which we find moſt firmly rooted in their hearts. And the Exiſtence of this Perſwaſion we affirm to be Impoſſible without the Exiſtence of *Traditions ever-Indeficiency* to beget it.

4. To prove this, I lay this firſt Principle. *That Age which holds her Faith deliver'd thus from the Apoſtles neither can it ſelf have chang'd any thing in it, nor know or doubt that any Age ſince the Apoſtles had chang'd or innovated any thing therein.* This Propoſition needs no proof to

evidence

evidence it, but onely an Explication; For, since no man can *hold* contrary to his Knowledge, or *doubt* of what he *holds*, nor change or innovate in the case propos'd without *knowing* he did so; 'tis a manifest Impossibility an whole Age should fall into an Absurdity so inconsistent with the Nature of one single man.

5. The second Principle shall be this, *No Age could innovate any thing, and withal deliver that very thing to Posterity as receiv'd from Christ by continual succession.* For, since Man is a rational Creature, he must have some reason or motive, good or bad, which he proposes to himself as an End to be atchiev'd by his action; and (whatever his remote end is) his immediate End in telling Posterity a late invented thing was held immediately before, is to make them believe it; Wherefore, since a seen Impossibility cannot be a motive to one not frantick, and that 'tis evidently Impossible they should make Posterity believe a thing so universally known to be false as this must needs be; because were it possible the whole Age should conspire to tell such a lye, (the *whole*, I say, otherwise the Refusers would easily discover the cheat) yet 'tis manifestly Impossible all at age to know the truth should conspire from so many several and so far distant places, in the precise time to deceive the new Off-spring every moneth ripening to a capacity of such knowledges, or blot out all the Monuments which would evidently undeceive

their

their abuſed Poſterity: 'Tis then as impoſſible this Principle ſhould falter as that the foregoing Age ſhould conſpire to act without a motive or that the ſucceeding Age ſhould *believe* what they *know* to be *otherwiſe*; that is, ſhould hold both ſides of a Contradiction in a clear matter of Fact, which is utterly inconſiſtent with a judging or cognoſcitive nature.

6. Theſe Principles lay'd, we we will advance to the proof of our main Concluſion on this manner; that ſince neither any Age (by our firſt Principle) could hold a new-introduc't point for not-new but immediately deliver'd; nor yet any foregoing Age (by our ſecond) make it be receiv'd as not-new by Poſterity, it follows that in no Age could any doctrin changing the immediate Faith of Fore-fathers or new at that time, come in or be received under the notion of immediately deliver'd or not-new at that time. Wherefore, ſince nothing can deſcend or come down under the notion of not-new, or deliver'd uninterruptedly, unleſs it firſt come in or be receiv'd under the notion of not-new or deliver'd uninterruptedly, nor be held by us as deſcended under ſuch a notion unleſs it did actually deſcend to us under ſuch a notion (by the ſecond) it follows manifeſtly that, if we now hold it deſcended as ſuch, it did deſcend as ſuch, and conſequently was received by the deliverers as ſuch; and (the ſame reaſon holding equally in each Age from Chriſt,) came down conſequently from Chriſt

and

and his Apoſtles. No power then or wit of man could make our Faith *now held to be ſo deſcended*, but *its having been actually ſo deſcended*: that is, onely the Exiſtence of Tradition's Indeficiency could have effected this preſent perſuaſion of Traditionary Chriſtians (or Catholicks) that their Faith deſcended uninterruptedly from the Apoſtles. It being then manifeſt by Experience that this Effect or preſent Perſuaſion *is*, (for all Catholiks hold the Church never fail'd in Faith,) 'tis demonſtratively Evident that its proper and onely Cauſe has been put; that is, that Chriſtian Tradition has ever been held to by a Body of Men conſiſting of the Predeceſſors to thoſe whom we find actually thus perſwaded.

NINTH

NINTH DISCOURSE.

Opening the incomparable ſtrength of the Churches Human Authority, and the Infinit advantages accrue to It by the Supernatural Aſſiſtances of the Holy Ghoſt.

1. BUt all this is Nature may ſome ſay, and by this Method an Heathen may by his natural wit become a good Chriſtian. By which word *Nature*, if the Objecter means Reaſon wrought upon by motives laid by God's ſpecial goodneſs to bring Souls to Bliſs, I wonder what elſe is *Supernaturality* but this which he miſcalls *Nature*; and why Reaſon, rectify'd by ſuch Lights and Propoſals as the force of Nature could not have aym'd at much leſs effected, ought not to be ſaid to be affected *ſupernaturally*, however thoſe very motives be connatural to our Souls: It being evident that we uſe even the natural power of our Reaſon in diſcourſing of things above our reaſon; and, on the other ſide to expect no conſtant way or common path of motives laid for the Salvation of Mankind, but extraordinary inſpirations for each particular man, unravell's the Order of God's beſt Providence, and is the very notion of Fanatickneſs. But to meddle with this point is out of my road otherwiſe than to take my riſe hence to ſhow how far Chriſtian Tradition is ſtrengthen'd above the

greateſt meerly-human Teſtimony whatever: And that the Church owes this ſtrength to thoſe Motives ſupervening to meer Nature, which we rightly call *Aſſiſtances of the Holy Ghoſt*; in regard they are built on Perfections of Will in the Faithful, or on Virtues, the Effects properly attributed to that Divine Perſon.

2. Ere we come to explain what advantage the Church as thus divinely aſſiſted has over her ſelf as meerly wrought upon by human motives, we will compare firſt her human Authority with ſome other vaſt Body of Teſtifiers which may moſt ſeem to ſtand in competition with her. And an eminent and acute oppoſer of Tradition has already pointed us out a choice one; namely, that of the *Mahometans* for *Mahomet*'s Exiſtence: which we doubt not to have the power to convey down the Truth thereof with Infallible Certainty to the end of the world, if follow'd; nor do we think the moſt Sceptical Proteſtant doubts but it has had the force to make it ſelf be follow'd hitherto; however at unawares their calm Reaſon grants that to a Body of Turks which their Paſſion makes them queſtion and even deny to a Church of Chriſtians. Yet, I averr that the human force of Tradition in the Church for the deſcent of the main Body of Chriſts doctrin far exceeds that of the Turks for *Mahomet*'s Exiſtence.

3. To ſhew this in brief I note in the firſt place and chiefly; that howſoever a report may

spread universally from a small beginning in the quality of a rumour, yet the force of its Credibility, if it be a matter of Fact, is founded on the Quantity and Quality of those who first saw or perceiv'd it. Putting then the Quality of the Testifiers in both cases to be equal, so to bring our Controversy to a smaller compass, and comparing onely the Quantity or Number of the original Testifiers on both sides; what proportion is there between that handful of men about *Mecha* and some few other places where *Mahomet* conquer'd and planted his doctrin, and those vast multitudes whom all the Apostles, Disciples, and Apostolical men converted by most powerful miracles in so many distant Nations in the World? If we lay them together we shall find that few saw or felt (that is, were witnesses of) *Mahomets* Existence so much as once, in comparison of those who were every day imbu'd with and practic't Christian Doctrine. A new Consideration springs hence that 'tis a thousand times easier for that single company of *Arabians* and *Syrians* to conspire to a ly and so deliver down to us a false *Mahomet*, than it is for such a multitude of people in so remote Countries as first suck't in Christianity to conspire in the very thought of having such a Conspiracy. And, lastly, it was as easie by oft repeated Sensations to know Christian Doctrin at first to that degree as to govern their actions by it (which is all that is requisit for the generality) it giving the Prin-

ciples to the daily practice of their new Life as they were Christians, as it was for these other witnesses to be certain of *Mahomet's* Existence; and much easier, in regard the greater part by far of those whom we allow Witnesses of *Mahomets* Existence perhaps scarce knew him by sight; not conversing him daily or very often, as each of the Primitive Christians did with those points of Faith they guided their lives by.

4. The human Authority then of the Church being such as exceeds she Evidence of other Testimonies, which yet are such that amongst all the most extravagant *Opiniastres* none was ever found so frantick as to doubt them; and should any do so, all sober Mankind would esteem them stark mad; which could not be done in reason unless they renounc't perfect evidence, that is, unless those Testimonies were perfectly Evident: This, I say, being so, some may think it superfluous and a quirk of an over-straining Fancy to contend there is any greater Evidence to ascertain the conveyance of our Faith from Christ's time to us. But, whoever reflects on the reason of those words, *Sic Deus dilexit Mundum ut Filium suum Unigenitum daret*, John 3. 16. Or for those, *Nunquid de bobus cura est Deo?* 1 Cor. 9. 9. *Nonne vos magis pluris estis volatilibus cæli?* Mat. 6. 26. and such like; or, on what Metaphysicks demonstrate concerning the perfect methods and wayes of Essential

Eſſential Wiſdome, will eaſily be convinc't that, if the Salvation of Mankind be the *End* of this material world's Creation, the Providences to bring about this End ought in true wiſdome be ſo particular and ſo ſublimely efficacious that the means laid for the preſervation of any other *ſpecies* in Nature would ſcarce deſerve the name of a Providence in compariſon of the other. Whence follows, that the means which are mainly influential to promote Man towards Bliſs (ſuch as is *Faith*, the Rule of that Life by which he tends to Heaven, and the *Subſtance of his Hope* which gives the vigour to that Life) muſt be Certain (its Efficacy depending on this Certainty) beyond any Evidence meer Nature could compaſs. Which that great Meditater on God's Law day and night well comprehended, when out of the full ſight of this Truth he burſt out into that expreſſion of wonderment, *Teſtimonia tua, Domine, credibilia facta ſunt nimis.*

5. We will briefly touch at ſome of the Advantages which thoſe Aſſiſtances ſuperadded to Nature give the Church, and leave them to be ſcann'd by the leaſurely thoughts of attentive Conſiderers.

6. Firſt then, we find that 'tis natural to every Man that his Phantaſms ſhould be ſuch as the Impreſſions of the Objects are apt to make them, his Thoughts appropriated to his Phantaſms, and his outward expreſſions concerning the thing,

and amongſt them his Words, conformable to his Thoughts: So that true Words and ſincere Actions are the proper Effects of the other Cauſes, and neceſſarily produc't by them if Deſigne hinder not: Which amounts to this, that 'tis Natural for every man to ſpeak Truth; and that, whenever one ſpeaks Falſe wittingly, Artifice makes him caſt about to contrive aptly fittingly to the end he aims at; whence it is that Fools and drunken men, who are incapable of ſuch Artifice, uſe to tell the plain Truth. If this be ſo in Nature, and that Grace is to perfect Nature in whatever is good in it, it follows that one truly Chriſtian heart is far more fixt to Veracity than others not imbu'd with thoſe heavenly Teuets; and conſequently that a Multitude of ſuch incomparably exceed, in point of teſtifying, the ſame number of others unfortify'd by Chriſt's Doctrin.

7. This will be clearer if we reflect upon the way by which Original Corruption violates frequently in execution this natural Veracity; and 'tis this; that inclining and tranſporting them to the undue love of Creatures even to the injuring known rational Orders laid in the world and moſt neceſſary for the ſubſiſtence or Univerſal well-being of Mankind (which we call the Commandments) hence, afraid to own ſuch an enormous procedure, they caſt about to cloak it with ſought-pretences. The ſum therefore of Chriſtianity tending to implant in the hearts

of

of the Faithful an over-powering Love of Supreme ſpiritual Goods attainable in the next Life, and by conſequence to take off their extravagant affection to earthly things, it leaves Man's natural diſpoſition to Truth free to do its Effect, and renders needleſs that crafty way of deſign, onely which could byaſs and pervert the Will from purſuing the way of Nature.

8. Compare we now the poſitive Motives, *Natural* and *Supernatural*, obliging to Veracity, and we find the Hopes and Fears which Chriſtianity propoſes to make and keep men Good as infinitly exceeding the Natural ones as Eternity does a moment, abating the intenſeneſs of the Goods and Harms hop't for and fear'd, nay held firmly by all and conceited lively by many to be beyond all imaginable compariſon greater than the other. Yet experience tells us and none doubts but that theſe tranſitory and incomparably-leſs Goods and Harms are ſufficient Motives to oblige Bodies of Men to deliver down Politick or Natural matters of Fact, as the Exiſtence of ſuch former Kings (to blunder which truth there wanted not higheſt Intereſts were it conceiv'd feiſible) ſuch Eclipſes, Wars, *&c.* Inconcievably more powerful then muſt the other motives be to oblige them to Veracity in ſuch narrations on which the deſtroying or preſerving thoſe higheſt concerns depend. And what prevalency Eternal motives had over Temporal ones when they came to claſh ſo neer as one

must forego one Hope or the other is seen by the perpetual and constant sufferings of the Martyrs in all Ages, and the many Persecutions daily and gladly undergone every day in many places for Conscience-sake.

9. In the Natural Commonwealth there are multitudes of men deputed particularly to great Trusts, and some Extraordinary Ceremony done upon them to make them true to such Trusts, nay Oaths by things they highly reverence taken, not onely by those Officers, but sometimes (though rarely) by the Generality to secure their Fidelity. But what proportion can those *Ceremonies* bear being but of human Institution to the *Sacraments* of the Church held to have been instituted by Christ himself; many of which are common to all Christians; some to initiate them most solemnly at first, or to rivet that Initiation with a new military *Tessera*; some to strengthen and cure the languishing; some to win to Love by Acts of greatest Bounty; Others are proper to impower some as Officers to oversee the common affairs of Faith; all tending to strengthen powerfully the Generality not to prevaricate from the Faith held ever truly received down, and particularly to oblige Governours not to bely themselves or connive at others grosly belying their Forefathers and betraying their *Depositum*.

10. Though Nature teaches the rudest that they should not do to another what they would

not

ot have done to themſelves, yet Original Cor-
ption too often makes us prevaricate in pra-
ice from that evident Rule: and the Reaſon
becauſe while men's Affections are chiefly
tch't on Temporal Goods, hence, in regard
hey are finite, that is ſuch that if one have
ore another has leſs of them, ſuch men are
ot enviouſly to deprive their partaking Neigh-
ours of them, that ſo the greateſt part may
ll to their own ſhare: But, ſuch an action can
ever proceed from, nor thought enter into the
oft deprau'd nature as to harm another without
ny good to himſelf. Now, this in our Caſe
uſt be put, if we put Chriſtian Fathers miſ-
aching their Children unreceived doctrins for
ceived contrary to their own knowledge. For,
ppoſing Sanctity in the Church, that is, that
ultitudes in it make Heaven their firſt Love,
nd look on Spiritual Goods as their main con-
ern, which are of ſuch a Nature that none has
eſs for another's having more, but on the con-
ary the Multitudes of virtuous perſons would
elp to encreaſe both Virtue and Glory too in
heir fellowes and relations; It follows, that
ad thoſe Fathers in any Age conſented to miſ-
ead their Poſterity from what themſelves con-
eit to be true, they ſhould do the moſt Extream
arm imaginable to others, without any the
eaſt Good to themſelves; which is perhaps im-
oſſible in one ſingle man, more in a few, but
nfinitly in a multitude, eſpecially of good men

More

Moreover, Christ's Law being the Law of C
rity, which includes Love of our Neighb
'tis directly opposit to the Principles of Chris
nity to do them an injury of so high a nature
to debar them Heaven and send them to He
and all this *gratis*.

11. Again, the greater the Recommends
any Truth is, the greater is the obligation no
bely our selves and it. Let us weigh then
Recommends which Christian doctrin recei
from Forefathers had; either as to its serious
port, that it be faithfully transmitted to othe
or the Universality, conceited wisdom, goo
ness, *&c.* of the Recommenders; and then
lance it with the Recommendation of any na
ral or civil Truth whatsoever, and we shall
it levitate like an inconsiderable feather or a
in comparison of the vast poize and weig
sway with which the other descended.

12. Nothing is by Nature more deeply
more universally rooted in the hearts of mank
than a dear and tender love of their off-spri
and a careful provision for their passing their
well, that is free from miseries, with a com
tency of such Goods as are held fitting for t
Nature. But how much more care must Ch
ty oblige Parents to have of their Children,
to use the means they conceive proper to br
them Everlasting and Infinit Bliss in Heav
and to avoid them Intolerable and Endless Mi
ries in Hell? Especially, since the performing
pr

evaricating from that Duty is of equal concern Themſelves? How ſtrange an advantage peradds Chriſtianity in this particular to the areſt natural love of our ſelves, or of our near- Relations who are next our ſelves!

13. Conſider we next the Natural care of not ſing one's Credit, and we ſhall find in com- on that, the good Opinion of others we call *redit* or Repute is look't upon as a moſt neceſſa- means to make men fit for human Society or ommerce, and without which none can expect thrive in his Vocation or live with comfort. eflecting next on the degrees of Diſcredit, we nd that he who tells a lye for his own ad- antage though without any harm to others, with uch ado eſcapes ſome diſrepute; but if his ye be pernicious, he is held an arrant villain; to neareſt Friends and Relations, ſtill greater: the miſchiefs he does by his falſe words or calings be exceeding great ones, he is yet more bominable, and proportionally ſtill as the harms, e induces, grow. If the motives he had to keep im good were very ſtrong and efficacious, he ſtill more enormous; and, as the ſtrength of hoſe preſervative motives encreaſe ſo is his Ma- ice ſtill enhanc't. But, if he go about all this wickedneſs boldly and confidently without ca- ing who knows it, eſpecially if he back his moſt notorious and moſt pernicious Lye with deepeſt Oaths and Perjuries by things moſt Sacred, he is now conceiv'd to be arriv'd at ſuch a pitch of

wickedneſs, that he is no longer to be held a Man, but a Divel Incarnate. But, how incomparably more wicked and conſequently diſgraceful muſt that man be, who believing Chriſt's doctrin to be thus received and the means to ſalvation, ſhould teach his Children otherwiſe! The believed miſchiefs he does his neareſt relations, no leſs than the loſs of Heaven and the ſad Gain of Hell-fire for all Eternity; the motives he had not to do it, as to his own concerns, full as Infinit; his lye moſt Notorious to all about him, and even the whole World. And, if he be a Paſtor, who (beſides other Sacraments implying moſt obliging vows not to renounce his Faith) is conſecrated by a particular one to preach Chriſt's doctrin truly and to preſerve his Flock ſound in Faith to his power, then to prevaricate from this Duty renders him a ſacrilegious abuſer of the moſt holy ſtate of life, and moſt inviolable tye this world, as Sanctify'd by our Saviour, has in it. What inconcievable villany then and conſequently diſcredit muſt that man ſeemingly undergo, who ſhall miſteach his own Fancies for doctrins deliver'd; and how impoſſible is it a World of Forefathers ſhould all conſpire to make ſo deſperate and abſolute a forfeit of their reputation and honeſty! 'Tis not poſſible to be ſumm'd up or even gheſt at, being beyond all proportion. The Advantage then with which Chriſtian Doctrin in the mind of *each*, and the Holy Ghoſt in the hearts of

of *most* of the Faithful, rivet and confirm this natural care of Credit to the preserving Tradition inviolable, is incomparable and in a manner Infinit.

14. It would require a large volum, to unfold particularly how each virtue contributes to show the inerrable Indeficiency of Tradition, and how the Principles of almost each Science are concern'd in demonstrating its Certainty: *Arithmetick* lends her Numbring and Multiplying Faculty to scan the vast number of Testifiers; *Geometry* her Proportions to show a kind of Infinit Strength of Certitude in Christian Tradition above those Attestations which breed Certainty in Human affairs; *Logick* her skill to frame and make us see the Connexions it has with the Principles of our Understanding; *Nature* her Laws of Motion and Action; *Morality*, her first Principle that nothing is done *gratis* by a Cognoscitive Nature, and that the Body of Traditionary Doctrin is most conformable to Practical Reason: *Historical Prudence* clears the Impossibility of an undiscernible revolt from points to descended & held so Sacred; *Politicks* show this to be the best way imaginable to convey down such a Law as it concerns every man to be skilful in: *Metaphysicks* engage the Essences of Things, and the very notion of *Being* which fixes every Truth; so establishing the scientifical Knowledges which spring from each particular nature by their first Causes or Reasons exempt from change or motion: *Divinity*

vinity demonstrates it most worthy God and most conducive to bring Mankind to Bliss. Lastly, *Controversy* evidences the total Uncertainty of any thing concerning Faith if this can be uncertain, and makes use of all the rest to establish the Certainty of this first Principle; and, which settled, secures Scripture as far as is requisit, and all things else that can mainly concern Salvation. To pursue these and many other Testimonies of Tradition's Infallibleness is not my task at present: I shall content my self with concluding, that, as we have prov'd it self-evident that Tradition if ever held to is an inerrable Rule, so our four last Discourses have shown its ever-indeficiency or rather Indefectibleness, scientifically Evident; and as strong as Nature and Grace strain'd (as we may say) to their utmost can make it.

Oord

COROLLARIES
From
The former Discourses.

1. *None can pretend to have Faith (by the ordinary course of God's Providence) but the holders to Tradition.* 'Tis prov'd by our Conclusion formerly deduc't, (*Disc.* 5. *Q.* 15.) that *Tradition is the Rule of Faith*, that is, the Ordinary Way to arrive at Faith.

2. *None can with right pretend to be a Church but the Followers of Tradition.* For, since (*Corol.* 1.) none can have Faith by the ordinary course of God's Providence but the holders to Tradition, and a Church must be a Congregation of persons truly *Faithful*, or who have true Faith coming to them by ordinary means, (as we daily experience,) 'tis manifest that none but the Followers of Tradition can pretend to be a true Church.

3. *None can be of the Church or any Church but Followers of Tradition.* For, seeing a Church is a Congregation of persons who have true Faith coming to them by ordinary means, and (*Disc.* 5. *Q.* 15.) Tradition is this means, it follows that none are of the Church or any Church but they who have true Faith by this means, that is, who follow the means of Tradition.

Those who renounce Tradition or Immediate Delivery, are ipso facto *cut off from the Root of Faith, and cease to be truly-call'd Faithful.* For

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seeing that is *to us*, or in the way of reasoning, the *Root* of any Knowledge whence that Knowledge springs, and Faith is no Knowledge in us, (*Disc.* 1. 15. and *Corol.* 1.) but by relying on the Rule of Faith or Tradition as on its Principle, 'tis manifest that they who renounce Tradition want the Root of Faith, nor consequently are Faithful nor of the Church, but are Dead branches or Opiners onely.

5. *That company of men who follow such Ancestours as formerly renounc't Tradition or Immediate Delivery are no less cut off from the Root of Faith.* For, since (*Corol.* 4.) those Ancestours renouncing Tradition formerly were by so doing cut off from the Root of Faith, their Followers (for how many Generations soever they continue) must be so likewise, as wanting and not daring even to pretend to that Faith-causing Principle of Tradition or uninterrupted Delivery which their Forefathers had renounc't.

6. *They who follow such Ancestors as formerly had manifestly renounc't Tradition (how numerous soever) can never claim to be a part of Christian Tradition or deliverers of Faith.* First, because (*Corol.* 5.) they are cut off from Tradition and so can be no part of it. Next, because Christian Tradition is Indeficient or Uninterrupted, (*Disc.* 6, 8, and 9.) and so none can lay claim to it who cannot lay claim to Uninterruptedness; which those we speak of cannot. The saying then of *Vincentius Lirinensis*, *Id teneamus quod ubique*,

que, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est, and that we must follow *Vniuersality*, *Antiquity*, and *Consent*, can onely be meant within the verge of those who adhere to Tradition, or follow the Doctrin formerly deliver'd, not of those who have broke from it; otherwise all Hereticks in the world, especially the Primitive ones might claim to be part of the Church.

7. *They who pretend themselves Reformers in Faith, do* ipso facto, *manifest themselves cut off from the Root of Faith and the Church.* For since Points of Faith are Truths, and so have no Degrees in them, but are Indivisible; *Reformation in Faith* cannot mean *mending Faith*, but putting it *anew*. But this presupposes Tradition Interrupted, wherefore Reformers in Faith must renounce Uninterruptedness of Delivery, that is, they must renounce *Tradition*; (*Disc.* 6. 8, 9.) and consequently they are cut off from the Root of Faith. (*Coroll.* 4.)

8. *That Body of men who adhere to Tradition can evidence clearly and plainly who are truly Faithful, who not.* For, since (*Coroll.* 4. & 5.) to those men 'tis all one to renounce Immediate or Uninterrupted Delivery, or follow those who renounce it, as to be cut off from the Root of Faith; and all one to be Faithful and to rely on that Principle: Again, seeing 'tis evident by clear matter of Fact who rely and proceed upon it, who not; That Body of men who adhere to Tradition can evidence clearly and plainly who are truly

Faithful, who not; and (if Church-Government be instituted by our Saviour and so a Point of Faith, and so descended to us by the Rule of Faith) who are of the Church, who not.

9. *None else can give any certain account who are to be held truly Faithful and of the Church, who not.* For since without Tradition both Letter and Sence of Scripture is Uncertain (*Disc.* 4.) and subject to dispute (as we also daily experience) it follows that all the deniers of Tradition are uncertain who have the right Letter or Sence of Scripture; that is, whom they are to esteem Faithful (or fit to be of the Church) whom not. Again, Tradition being the onely certain Rule of Faith, if one Revolter from it may be admitted, all may, so they profess Christianity in outward talk which they will easily do: Wherefore, since the Denier of Tradition deems some one Revolter from it to be of the Church, that is, himself; he may, nay ought judge so of all the rest, provided they talk a few fine pious words of God and Christ, which what Hereticks but did?

10. *None can rationally punish the Revolters from their Faith but that Body which adheres to Tradition.* For since, setting aside Tradition, both Letter and Sence of Scripture is Uncertain, (*Disc.* 4.) the Guilt of those Revolters is also Uncertain: seeing then none can even pretend to correct a fault much less punish it upon uncertain Grounds, none can rationally go about to punish

punish their Revolters from Faith unless it be that body which adheres to Tradition; and They can. For, in regard Tradition's Certainty is evident to the rudest by common sence, (*Disc.* 5. §. 8.) and likewise 'tis as evident to Governours who revolt from it as it is to know when one disacknowledges and rises against a settled civil Authority and the Laws of the Land; 'Tis most manifest that the Revolter hath both Passion or Guilt enough to be held punishable, and the Christian Magistrate evidence enough of his Fact to go about to punish it. To avoid mistake, I declare that in this Corollary I onely discourse what may or may not be done upon a *Church-account*, what may be fit to be done upon a *State-account*, I am neither able to judge, nor do I meddle with it.

11. *No Company of men hang together like a Body of a Christian Common-wealth or* CHURCH *but that which adheres to Tradition.* For, since 'tis manifest that every external Commonwealth or Body of men hath some Outward Marks proper to it, by which the members of it have their coherence, or consistency and that those are certain tokens to distinguish it from any other; and as manifest that all the marks proper to a Church as such depend upon the Rule of Faith, (*Disc.* 1. §. 15.) and their Certainty on its; and lastly, that none of the pretended Rules of Faith (all of them building on Scripture's Letter) are Certain, (*Disc.* 2. 3, 4.) without Tradition; it

follows that no other company have any Principle of Distinction from others, that is either of Constitution or self-preservation under the notion of *Church*, but that which adheres to Tradition. All the loud out-cry then made commonly against that Body which adheres to Tradition, call'd *Roman-Catholick*, for accounting it self onely the *Universal Church* and excluding all others is but empty noise, and her claim rational and well-grounded, till it be shown by evident Discourse that the other Pretenders have some other more Evident and Certain Rule to know who are of the Church who not, than this of *Tradition* now produc't and explicated; upon which she proceeds and by which she consists.

12. *There is no arguing against Tradition out of Scripture.* For, since (as we have prov'd *Disc.* 4.) there can be no absolute Certainty of Scripture's Letter without Tradition, this must first be suppos'd *Certain* ere the Scripture's Letter can be rationally held such; and consequently ought in reason to be held *Uncertain* while Tradition is thought fit to be argu'd against, that is, while it's Certainty is doubted of. Wherefore since none can argue solidly upon *uncertain* Grounds, none ought to argue against Tradition out of the Letter of Scripture.

13. *None can in reason oppose the Authority of the Church or any Church against Tradition.* First because in reality *Tradition* (rightly understood) is the same thing materially with the *living Voice*

and Practice of the whole Church Essential, consisting of Pastors and Layity; which is so ample that it includes all imaginable Authority which can be conceiv'd to be in a *Church*. Secondly, because in the way of generating Faith Tradition formally taken is antecedent to, (*Disc.* 2. §. 11.) and so in the way of Discourse working by formal and abstracted notions its notion must be presuppos'd and its Certainty establish't before the notion and Certainty of *Faith*, consequently of *Faithful*, and consequently of Church, which must necessarily be a congregation of *Faithful*. Whence they would argue very preposterously who should go about to oppose *Church* against *Tradition*; this being the same as to think to establish the House by overthrowing the Foundation.

14. *None can in reason oppose the Authority of Fathers or Councils against Tradition.* This is evident by the former, (*Corol.* 13.) in regard neither of these have any Authority but as Representatives of the Church, or Eminent Members of the Church: Nor can any determin certainly what is a Father or Council (*Disc.* 2. §. 11.) till the notion of *Church*, that is of *Faithful*, that is of *Faith*, that is of *Rule of Faith*, that is of *Tradition* be certainly establish't.

15. *No Disacknowledgers of Tradition are in Due of reason but in Courtesy onely to be allow'd to argue out of Scripture's Letter, Father or Council.* For, since, wanting Tradition they have Certainty of none of those (as was prov'd, *Disc.* 2. §. 11.)

'tis manifeſt that, diſacknowledging Tradition, while they alledge and talk of theſe they alledge and talk of things themſelves do not know to be Certain. Wherefore, 'tis too great a Condeſcendence and courteſy in Catholiks to let them run forwards deſcanting with wordiſh Diſcourſes on thoſe Teſtimonies after their raw manner, ſince they might juſtly take their advantage againſt them and ſhow they have no right to make uſe of Principles, which their own Grounds can never make good to them; as was *Tertullian's* ſmart and ſolid way, *de Præſcr. Hæret.* c. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. denying them the uſe of Scripture who deny'd the Church; which would ſave many an aiery confus'd diſcourſe about words, unapt to evidence any thing ſatisfactorily. Nor can the right of an Opponent to argue *ad hominem* licence them to claim this favour from our Controvertiſts; in regard we never held that Scriptures Letter hammer'd upon by Criticiſms and ſuch pretty knacks of human Learning was the Ground of our Faith nor the way to eſtabliſh it, but onely as interpreted by the Language and Practice of the Church; nor conſequently can we hold it capable to be prejudic't by ſuch endeavours of private Wits. Though then we ſhould allow them a Copy of the Letter, and conſequently ſo far a liberty to argue *ad hominem* againſt us; yet we never allow'd their method of arguing from it, as efficacious, either to build or evert Faith, but our learned Controvertiſts ever held

direct contrary. Whence, in case they clamour that in not following their wild method we desert Scripture (to avoid which calumny with the vulgar I conceive one reason our Controvertists generally were so civil to them as to cope with them in their sleight way) the unreasonableness of the Calumny is to be made appear, which is quicklier done, not their unreasonable expectation to be satisfy'd.

16. *No Authority from any History or Testimonial* Writing *is valid against the force of Tradition.* For, since Falshood is as easy to be writ or printed as Truth, 'tis evident those *Books* can give no Testimony to themselves that what they expres is *certainly true*; and, if we say they are abetted by the Testimony of other Books, the same question recurrs concerning them, in what Age soever they were writ. It remains then that 'tis onely the Acceptation of Men or *Sence* writ in their *Hearts* and so convey'd down from Father to Son that these Books are true Histories and not Fables, which gives them any Authority: But this has plainly the nature of *Tradition*; They have therefore no Authority but by force of Tradition: Therefore they can have no possible force against Tradition; since, if Tradition, or the conveying down from hand to hand sence writ thus universally in men's hearts, can deceive us, no such Books can have any Authority at all: Wherefore, not the *Books*, but the *Sence* writ in men's hearts of the Goodness

and skill of the Authours of thoſe Books (upon which qualifications the Truth of each paſſage contain'd in thoſe Books is built) is to be alledg'd againſt Chriſtian Tradition, ſince 'tis that Sence which authorizes thoſe Books and gives Credibility to thoſe paſſages, and ſo is ſtronger than any *dead* Teſtimony from the Books themſelves. Which devolves into this, that onely ſome great Tradition or *living Teſtimony* for things paſt, can, in point of Authority, be pretended an equal match to *Chriſtian Tradition* or competent to be alledg'd againſt it.

17. *No Tradition is alledg'd or alledgeable in reaſon againſt Chriſtian Tradition.* That none is alledg'd is Evident from matter of Fact: For, the Adverſaries of Catholick Tradition never pretend the Conſent or conſtant Sence of great multitudes deriv'd from age to age by living voice that at ſuch a time former Tradition was relinquiſh't, new Faith introduc't, or the old Faith chang'd or aboliſht; but onely odd ends or ſcraps of Hiſtories or other dead Teſtimonies, according as they light on ſome paſſage which ſeems favourable to them, or may be rendred interpretable that way. Whence, there are almoſt as many minds as men about the time when any change was made; nay, ſome of their beſt Champions, Dr *Whitaker*, and Mr *Powel*, profeſs *the time of the Romiſh Churches change cannot eaſily be told*, and that they *cannot tell by whom or at what time the Enemy did ſow the Papiſts Doctrin:*

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This, I ſay, being ſo, 'tis moſt Evident they decline the pretence of any Tradition againſt ours, and the very way of deriving down orally and practically Sence writ in mens Hearts by matter of Fact working on their Senſes; and, inſtead of that, recurr to pittiful ſhreds and fragments of words, utterly unauthoriz'd if the Tradition for that Books Goodneſs can fail: And, if Catholick Tradition, which in its ſource was ſo largely extended, viſible and practicable by all can faulter, ten thouſand times more eaſily may the Tradition for any particular Book, which in compariſon of the other can be but of a very obſcure Original, fail and deceive us.

Now, that no Tradition is alledgeable againſt us by Proteſtants appears hence, that their immediate Foreſathers little more than an 100. Years ago being Catholicks; that is, holders of their Faith no Novelty but uninterruptedly deſcended, could never conſpire to deliver to them any ſuch ſence that the Roman Church had alter'd her Faith, ſince they had the contrary ſence writ in the Tables of their hearts. Nor can they have recourſe to the Greek Church for a Tradition oppoſit to ours for any points of Faith in which they differ from us, for they will find none ſuch. Nor is the Greek Church Progenitours to them here in *England*, nor by conſequence can they derive traditionarily from them.

18. *No ſolid Argument from Reaſon or intrinſecal*

ſecal Principles is producible againſt Chriſtian Tradition. For, ſince Arguments, if ſolid, are taken from Things or Nature, and the Certainty of Chriſtian Tradition is built on the *beſt* Nature, that is, *Man's*; not according to what is alterable in it, but what is (abſtracting from diſeaſe) abſolutely unalterable; that is, on Knowledge imprinted by natural Senſations; and this Knowledge ſtrengthen'd and made moſt lively by the oft-repeatedneſs of thoſe Senſations, and the import of the Things known: Alſo, ſince moſt efficacious Cauſes actually appli'd, that is, impoſſible not to do the Effect, and Effects impoſſible to be without ſuch a Cauſe's Exiſtence are engag'd for the ever-continuance or Uninterruptedneſs of Tradition (as hath been ſhown, *Diſc.* 6. & 8.) and the force of thoſe preſerving Cauſes ſtrengthen'd by the moſt powerful aſſiſtances of the Holy Ghoſt, (*Diſc.* 9.) or by beſt Graces ſuperadded to beſt Nature; 'Tis impoſſible any ſolid Argument from Reaſon ſhould be brought againſt Tradition.

19. *The arguing by way of ſome few Inſtances* (as the manner is) *can have no force againſt Tradition's Certainty and Indefectiveneſs.* For, ſeeing a pretended Inſtance of Tradition's failing is a particular action preſumed to be long ago paſt, and particulars out of the very nature of being particulars are ſurrounded by a thouſand individuating circumſtances or rather conſtituted by them, that is, are plac't in the proper ſphere of

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Contingency: and that particular Action is put to be long ago past, and to affects not our Senses by Experience (in which is founded the force of Instances, in regard Experimental Knowledge is a necessary Effect of the Things being such as it is known) Nor have we, or can we have without Tradition, any certain knowledge (*Coroll.* 16.) that the Points of Faith pretended to have miscarried or to have been altered then, or else the manner of expressing them, were not mistaken then or misrepresented to us now; nor that Interest (for example) of one party passion between both, ambiguity of words, slightness or confusedness of report grounding the Historians narration, rashness of belief in him, corruption of his Books since they were writ, and innumerable other chances apt to occasion mistake did not intervene; any of which would render the Instance uncertain, and the Argument from it Inconclusive. Again, seeing we can have certainty of our own meaning of our words when we demonstrate, and also of our consequence, it follows that the way for a solid man to answer Traditions pretended demonstrableness must be to show the incoherence of the Terms, and not to bring some old story against it; which were to produce Uncertainty known to be such, against pretended Certainty and not yet known to be other than such; nay whose Evidence we cannot in reason deny till we can solve the connexion of Terms drawn from intrin-

intrinſecal Mediums, on which 'tis built.

20. *The denying Tradition is a proper and neceſſary diſpoſition to Fanatickneſs.* For, ſince no Argument taken from any *dead* or *written* Teſtimony, (*Coroll.* 12. 14. 16.) nor *living* Teſtimony of *Tradition*, (*Coroll.* 13. 17.) nor from any thing in Nature, *Coroll.* 18.) that is, from any thing *without* us which is a ſecond *Cauſe*, is valid againſt Tradition: It follows that Tradition cannot be denied but by pretending ſome Light or Knowledge *within us* deriv'd from the immediate Influence of the *Firſt Cauſe*. To which pretence helps its difficulty to be confuted; in regard 'tis eaſie to ſtand ſtiff in this Tenet that they ſee clearly ſuch Truths by an inward Light, and that therefore it were a madneſs to go about to confute their own manifeſt Experience; whereas, were Arguments produc't openly, they and their confutations might be publiſht together, and the Truth would lie expos'd to the ſcanning and deciſion of the Indifferent part of the world, and be clear'd by a few Replies if a right method of diſcourſe be taken. Wherefore, ſince Nature will eaſily teach the obſtinate deniers of any Principle to avail themſelves by the beſt plea they can to eſcape confuting, 'tis manifeſt that Nature will connaturally carry the deniers of Tradition to Fanatick Principles, and that men are ſo long and no longer preſerv'd from Fanatickneſs than they follow Tradition or the openly declar'd

Sence

Sence of Forefathers either in our Church or some other Congregation.

Again, Tradition being the way of coming to Faith by the open use of our Senses, the denying it must drive the deniers to deny that way, and to recurr to Knowledge had some other way; Not to Knowledge acquir'd by human skill, (the Knowledge of such high mysteries being confessedly more than human) therefore to infus'd Knowledge; and this not infus'd by ordinary wayes, as preaching, teaching of Forefathers and such like (as we experience such Knowledges to be infus'd into us) for this again falls into the way of Tradition; therefore they can onely have refuge to inward Light or Knowledge infus'd extraordinarily or without connatural means; to make which the common road of receiving Heaven's Influences is the very definition of Fanaticknes.

21. *Fanatick Principles can have no force against Tradition, though unconfutable but by it.* For, since they pretend for their ground a Light within imprinted on such a manner as manifests God the Authour, that is, an Effect which onely themselves know and are conscious of, and on the other side nothing appears why such a kind of Impression is impossible, nay 'tis granted possible, 'tis clear none can argue against that inward Light's existence out of the nature of that inward perswasion Fanaticks have, in regard 'tis latent and unknown. It follows then that the way to conclude against it is to show out of evi-

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dent Principles the contrary to these Inspiration to be Truth: None therefore (as plain matter of Fact testifies) taking the way of arguing from *Principles* absolutely *evident*, or demonstrating, but Catholiks or the followers of Tradition, and they effecting this by virtue of Tradition, *Disc.* 5, 6, 8.) it follows that they and onely they are able to confute Fanaticks and conclude their inward Light delusive. Again, since a Fanatick builds on conceited experience of Divine Inspiration, there is no hopes to convince his Judgment without producing Demonstration for the contrary; a task onely performable in the way of Tradition. Which is enforc't and strengthen'd by this Consideration, that the Basis of Tradition is natural Knowledge directly imprinted by his Senses, in which Knowledges he is undeceivable; and these Sensations or Knowledges are daily repeated, not on one private temper but on innumerable millions conspiring in the same, that is, Tradition is built on almost Infinit, daily and most manifest Experiences; whereas the conceited Effect of Inspiration, or his strong persuasion that God speaks thus inwardly is found with consent of tenets in a few onely; and liable to deceit by depending upon Fancy, not Sense; as appears in diseased or mad persons, and the Fanaticks contradicting one another though both proceeding on the same Principle. Without Tradition's help then 'tis very hard (if not impossible) to confute Fanaticks, (as Experience

ence also testifies by Protestants being fore't to recurr to Tradition in disputes with them) though very easy with it, or by means of it.

22. *There is no arguing against Tradition without questioning the Constancy of every Species in Nature, that is the Certainty of whole Nature.* For, seeing Man's Nature is as necessarily fit to receive the direct Impressions of Objects on his Soul, that is Natural Knowledges, and as necessarily determin'd to work for a motive or reason good or bad, as Fire is to heat or water to wet, and this absolutely and alwayes abstracting from disease incapacitating him to use his senses or his Fancy, and both these spring out of the very Substance of his Nature as Rational or of such a *Species*, which Original Corruption hinders not; it follows that he is as fit for those Operations, and consequently will as frequently perform them as Fire burn, water wet, fruit-trees bear fruit, or any other *Species* in Nature do its ptoper Effect; that is generally, and onely rarely and contingently fail, unless the Authour of Nature order the whole course of it worse for Man than for other things, which were blasphemy to say, and contrary to Experience; since we find a course of Supernaturals on foot, and that they comfort and strengthen man's true nature as hath been formerly declared. Less liable then is the human *Species* to contingency in those its natural operations than any other kind is. Wherefore,

seeing

ſeeing Traditions Certainty is grounded upon direct natural Knowledges, and its Indefectiveneſs on Mankind's Incapableneſs to act without ſome motive; to argue againſt It were to queſtion Theſe, that is, the conſtancy of the beſt and beſt-ſupported *Species* in Nature, and a *fortiori* the Conſtancy of the reſt.

Note here, that all the Arguments brought by witty Reaſoners againſt Tradition are fetcht from the Contingency of ſome one or ſome few Particulars, whence by a wild kind of roving way they would conclude the defectibleneſs of the Generality or of the entire *Species*: But, becauſe it looks too palpably inconſequent in Logicall form to ſay, *a few can err*, ergo *all*, therefore they uſe to bring it in with a *why not*. So that all the arguers againſt Tradition from natural reaſon oppoſe directly any Conſtancy in the *Species* or Generality, and ſo are deſtroyers of natural Certainty and of their own Arguments to boot.

23. *There is no poſſibility of arguing at all againſt Tradition rightly underſtood, or the living voice of the Catholick Church with any ſhow of reaſon.* For, ſince 'tis evident that Scripture's Copy or Lettet is in the whole and every tittle Uncertain (*Diſc.* 2, and 4.) without Tradition; as alſo that the writings of Fathers, Councils, Hiſtory, and of any written or *dead* Teſtimony whatever, (*Corol.* 14, and 16.) are utterly unauthoriz'd otherwiſe than by means of Tradition,

Tradition, and that no living Teſtimony or Tradition is alledgable againſt the Tradition we ſpeak of or Catholick Tradition, (*Corol.* 13. and 17.) Nor any pretended Inſtance of Traditions failing has force but by its being faithfully convey'd down by Tradition and depending on Tradition for its Certainty, (*Corol.* 19.) and all Arguments from Natural Reaſon are ſo weak that they deſtroy all Certainty in that matter while levell'd againſt Tradition, (*Corol.* 18. & 22.) It follows, that no Argument from any Authority publickly appearing in the world, nor yet from intrinſecal *mediums* fetcht from ſecond Cauſes in Nature can bear any ſhow againſt Tradition. Nor yet from private Effects pretended from the firſt Cauſe, call'd Inſpiration or Light of the Private Spirit (*Corol.* 21.) For, (beſides what has been concluded for this point) however this pretence may make the firſt Syllogiſm, yet when it comes to be prov'd, that is made appear outwardly, that the firſt Cauſe inſpir'd thus or thus, no extraordinary Effects proper to that Cauſe (as miracles) being producible, their arguing or Proof is at an end, however their Inward Adheſion ſtands. There being then no other Argument imaginable, but what is fetcht from Authority living or dead, or elſe from Effects or Experience teſtifiable by thoſe Authorities, or from proper Effects or Cauſes in the ordinary courſe of natural things, or from extraordinary private and unſeen pre-

tended Effects of the first Cause; and none of these bearing any show against Tradition; 'Tis evident *There is no possibility of arguing against Tradition rightly understood, or the living voice of the Catholick Church, with any show of Reason.*

24. *Tradition is the First Principle in the way of Authority as it engages for matter of Fact long ago past.* For, seeing that is the first Principle in any Knowledge into which all Knowledges in that kind are resolv'd to establish their Certainty, and all ptetended Authorities for any matter of Fact long ago past (*Corol.* 16.) and consequently all Knowledges caus'd by the means of them, are resolv'd finally into Tradition and depend on it for their Certainty; it follows that Tradition is the very first Principle in the way of Authority as it undertakes for the truth of matters of Fact long ago past.

25. *Tradition, in the matter of Tradition (that is, in matter of Fact before our time) is Self-evident to all those who can need the Knowledge of such things, that is, to all Mankind who use common Reason.* This is evident from the former; For, first Principles are to be Self-evident to all those who are to use them and proceed upon them, which in our case is the most ordinary vulgar.

26. *The Certainty of Tradition being establish't the whole Body of the Faithful* (by which I mean *Catholicks*) *or the Church Essential, is, by rely-*

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ing on it, infallibly certain that it is in poſſeſſion of Chriſt's true doctrin. For, ſince Tradition is Self-evidently a Certain way if followd (*Diſc.* 5. §.8.&13.) and both beſt Nature and beſt Grace in this world are engaged that it hath been and ſhall be ever followed. (*Diſc.* 6. and 9.) Again, ſince the Certainty of what Faith was formerly taught muſt needs deſcend to us as matter of Fact formerly paſt, that is whoſe Certainty depends on Authority, and Tradition is the firſt Principle in way of Authority as it engages for matters of Fact formerly paſt (*Corol.* 24.) and Self-evident to the proceeders on it (*Corol.* 25.) that is to the Body of Catholicks: Laſtly, ſince Chriſtian Tradition rightly underſtood is nothing but the living voice of the Catholick Church Eſſential as *delivering*, 'tis manifeſtly and manifoldly evident that that Body which relies on It, that is the *Catholick* Church or (*Corol.* 6. & 11.) the whole Church Eſſential, is infallibly Certain that ſhe is in ſecure poſſeſſion of Chriſts true Doctrin.

27. *Tradition once eſtabliſht, General Councils and even Provincial ones, nay particular Churches are Infallible by proceeding upon It.* For the ſame reaſon; in regard that proceeding on it they proceed upon a Certain and Self-evident Principle; (*Corol.* 24. & 25.) that is ſuch a one as neither they can miſtake nor it miſlead them.

28. *The Roman See with its Head are particu-*

larly Infallible by the ſame means. For, in regard a more vigorous Cauſe put at firſt is apt to produce a greater Effect, and the Coreſidence, Joynt-endeavours, Preaching, Miracles, and laſtly Martyrdome of the two Chief Apoſtles working upon that City which commanded the greateſt part of the world were more vigorous Cauſes to imprint Chriſts Doctrin at firſt and recommend it to the next age than was found any where elſe; it follows that the ſtream of Tradition in its ſource and firſt putting into motion was more particularly vigorous here than in any other See. Again, ſince uninterrupted publicity of profeſſing Faith makes a greater viſibility of Faith, which is a manifeſt advantage to Tradition, and no Patriarchal See but the *Roman* hath continued ever from the Primitive times in a publick Profeſſion of Chriſts Faith, being held under by *Barbarians*; hence the *Roman* See (and incluſively their Paſtours and moſt their chief Paſtour) have a particular title to Infallibility built on Tradition above any other See or Paſtour whatſoever. Not to mention and dilate on the particular Aſſiſtances to the Clergy of that See, and moſt particular to its Biſhop, ſpringing out of their divinely conſtituted office, in regard 'tis a poſition unacknowledged by Adverſaries againſt whom I am diſcourſing.

29. *Tradition eſtabliſht, the Church is provided of a certain and Infallible Rule to preſerve a*

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Copy of the Scripture's Letter truly significative of Christs sence, as far as it is coincident with the main Body of Christian doctrin preacht at first. For, since 'tis certain the Apostles taught the same Doctrin they writ, 'tis manifest the Scripture's Letter was at first (for what of it was intended to signify Points of Faith) significative of Faith or Sence writ by miracles, preaching and practice in the hearts of the first Faithful: Wherefore, since the same sence that was preacht at first was preserv'd all along unalterably by Tradition, (*Disc.* 6. & 8.) and the same sence in mens hearts can easily guide them to correct the alteration of the outward Letter, so as to preserve it significative of the sence first delivered; Therefore Tradition establisht the Church is provided of a certain and Infallible Rule to preserve a Copy of the Scripture's Letter truly significative of Christ's sence, as far as Scripture is coincident with the main body of Christian Doctrin preacht at first.

30. *Tradition establisht the Church is provided of a certain and Infallible Rule to interpret Scripture's Letter by, so as to arrive certainly at Christ's Sence, as far as that Letter concerns the Body of Christian Doctrin preacht at first or points requisit to Salvation.* For, since (*Disc.* 6. & 8.) Tradition preserves the first deliver'd sence alive in mens hearts sent down by way of living voice and Christian practice; and these were in the beginning evidently a most certain way of know-

ing the Sence of the Letter, 'tis evident that they are ſtill ſuch. Wherefore Tradition eſtabliſht the Church is provided, *&c.*

31. *Tradition eſtabliſh't nothing can be received by the Church as held from the firſt or ever, unleſs held ever.* For, ſince (*Diſc.*5. §.13. & *Diſc.*6. & 8. & *Corol.* 24, & 25.) Tradition is ſelf-evidently a certain method of conveying down matters of Fact as they were found, it follows that, Tradition eſtabliſh't, points *not held ever* muſt be convey'd down ſuch as they were found, that is as *not held ever* and conſequently not as held from the firſt or ever.

32. *Tradition eſtabliſh't 'tis impoſſible any Errour againſt* Chriſt's *Faith ſhould bee received by the Church; that is no Errour contradicting Faith can be received as of Faith.* For, ſince to be received as of Faith is (*Diſc.* 6. & 8.) to Traditionary Chriſtians the ſame as to be received as held ever or from Chriſts time, and (*Corol.*31.) no point at all, though diſparate or indifferent, *not-held-ever* can be received as *held-ever*, 'tis evident that much leſs can an erroneous point contradicting what was held ever be received as held-ever.

33. *Notwithſtanding Tradition, Erroneous Opinions and (their proper Effects) abſurd Practices may creep into the Church and ſpread therefor a while.* For, ſince, notwithſtanding the Certainty of Tradition, the Church is ſtill, according to our Saviour, a Congregation made up

up of good and bad, and the Bad will do like themſelves, that is be glad to invent and propagate ſuch Principles as ſhall make for their own Ends or for Vices, that is, Erroneous ones; Again, ſince it cannot be expected but that multitudes even of good men in the Church ſhould in uſing their private reaſons be liable to Errour in divers particular points or Caſes, and that the remoteneſs of Chriſtian Principles or Points of Faith from the Principles of particular Actions or Caſes is apt to make the oppoſition between them not eaſily nor clearly diſcoverable at firſt, nay the ambiguity in wording them may make them appear at firſt ſight fairly reconcilable till the Terms be diſtinguiſht and clear'd from equivocation; 'tis very evident that Tradition's Certainty hinders not but Erroneous Opinions, and (their proper Effects) abſurd Practices may creep into the Church and ſpread there for a while.

34. *Erroneous Opinions can never gain any ſolid footing in the Church.* For, ſince (*Diſc.* 5. *q.* 15. *Corol.* 11.) the Church is a Body of men relying on *Tradition* or the Authority of atteſting Forefathers, not on the Authority of Opinators, theſe Opinions can never have any firmneſs in her by means of Authority; and, on the other ſide, being Erroneous, they can never gain any depth of adheſion by being demonſtrably true; nor (Errour being neceſſarily oppoſit to Truth) can they even maintain their quiet poſture by

being evidently not oppoſit to Faith; It follows that neither upon the ſcore of Reaſon nor Authority can they ſink deep into the minds of the Faithful (at leaſt the intelligent party of them) or gain any ſolid footing in the Church; but are ſubject to be contradicted or have their verity diſputed by the ſearching and unſatisfy'd wits of Oppoſers.

35. *The Prudence requiſit in Church-Government is one Cauſe why Erroneous Opinions are not immediately but after ſome long time perhaps to be declared againſt by the Authority of the whole Church.* For, ſince a Church is a moſt vaſt and ſacred Common-wealth, and ſo of the greateſt gravity and Authority imaginable, ſhe is not in prudence to engage it trivially in ſleight occaſions, nor raſhly when the point is unevident. Wherefore, ſeeing an Erroneous Opinion, while held but by few, is of ſleight concern, and ſo onely fit to be taken notice of by inferiour Officers; when univerſally held is of great Authority amongſt the multitude; ſhe is in Prudence to ſuſpend till its Oppoſition to Faith be clear'd by the Science of Divinity, and this ſatisfactorily to a great part of the Opinatours; leſt either ſhe ſhould in ſtead of tares pluck up wheat, or uſe her Authority more to deſtruction than edification by a too haſty deciſion.

36. *No Erroneous Opinion in Divinity, if Univerſal and Practical, can be very long permitted in the Church.* For ſince (*Corol.* 31.) a meer

meer Opinion can never gain the Authority of a Traditionary point, 'tis manifest it can never subsist when it is shown to clash with any of the said Points: Wherefore, since it is liable to discussion, and men are naturally of different Judgments and Interests, and the variety and Nature of worldly Interest is such that if any thing makes for the Interest of some 'tis for that very reason against the Interest of another, it will excite them to discussion and sifting its Conformity or Disconformity to Christian Principles, which is the way to clear the Terms and make it appear. But, especially, seeing absurd or irrational Practices are the proper Effects of Erroneous Principles, and that our natural Corruption inclines men to follow such Practices till they be checkt by regard to something held Sacred, that is by being shown opposit to Faith; it follows that, till this opposition be shown, they will infallibly grow on still more and more, till they come to such an height of absurdity that they need now no skill to discover them: Experience teaching us that the most palpable and evident method to try the Truth of any Speculation is to put it into matter and bring it into Practice. Those irrational Practices therefore must needs after some time discover themselves opposit to Christian behaviour, and consequently confess the Principle which begot them opposit to Christian Faith; which done, it presently loses its credit, and is quasht by the incompa-

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rably more powerful force and all over-bearing Authority of Tradition.

37. *Erroneous Opinions and the irrational Practices iſſuing from them (though ſuppos'd Univerſal and of long continuance) can never corrupt ſubſtantially the Judgments or Wills of the Faithful.* For, ſince (*Corol.* 31.) nothing not held ever or not coming from Chriſt can poſſibly be accepted as held ever or coming from Chriſt, 'tis evident no Erroneous Opinion can come to gain the ſacredneſs and repute of a Traditionary point, nor their proper practices the Eſteem of Chriſtian Practice; Wherefore, Traditionary Points being the Principles which abſolutely poſſeſs the Judgmenrs and govern the lives of the Faithful as Chriſtians, it follows that no Opinion can ever be held by them but in a conciev'd ſubordination to Traditionary points or points of Faith, nor practic't by them but with a conceivd ſubordination and conformity to thoſe Practices which ſpring from undoubtedly-known Chriſtian Tenets or Traditionary points. Seeing then what is not held and practic't but as conceivd ſubordinate to other Tenets and Practices muſt needs be leſs held than thoſe others, nay not held at all otherwiſe than conditionally or upon ſuppoſal of ſuch a ſubordination, 'tis clearly conſequent that Traditions Certainty is ſo powerful an Antidote that bad Opinions and Practices can never corrupt ſubſtantially and abſo-

absolutely the Judgments or wills of the Faithfull.

38. *No Erroneous Opinion or its proper Practice is imputable to the Church properly and formally taken.* For, since the Church, formally as such, proceeds on Christian Tradition, no such Opinion nor consequently Practice is imputable to the Church properly and formally taken, but onely to some men in the Church (materially consider'd) as left to the contingent force of their private Discourses: that is, indeed, to the Schools not the Church.

39. *'Tis exceedingly weak and senceless to think to impugn the Church by objecting to her such Opinions and Practices.* For, since they concern her not, nor are imputable to her as *Church*, or to her Members as *Faithful*, the wise Objection can onely signify thus much, that the Church has men in her who are fallible in their private Discourses or School-disputes; that is, she has men in her who are *men*. A heavy imputation!

40. *The Knowledge of Tradition's Certainty is the first Knowledge or Principle in Controversial Divinity, that is, without which nothing is known or knowable in that Science.* For, since Controversy or the Science which establishes the Certainty of Faith depends on these two Propositions, *Whatever God said is true*, and *God said this*, the former of which is out of Controversy as we now handle it with our modern Dissenters, and onely the later

later is the subject of our debate: Seeing also (as hath been largely and manifoldly evident) nothing can ascertain us of this but Tradition, nor It unless its Certainty be known, it follows that the Knowledge of Tradition's Certainty is the first Knowledge or Principle in Controversial Divinity.

41. *Christ's promise to his Church (however comfortable to the Faithful) can bear no part in the notion of the Rule of Faith, nor be the first Principle of a Controversial Divine.* For, since Christ's promise to his Church is held as a point of Faith, that is, receiv'd upon the Rule of Faith, that is, subsequent to that Rule, 'tis manifest that it can be no part of that Rule nor first Principle in Controversy. Again, the Rule of Faith (*Disc.* 1. §. 4, and 9.) must be so evident as to its Existence that no other Knowledge must intervene between the natural power of Understanding and It, and this in the meanest vulgar; but, that Christ promist his Church Infallibility is not thus self-evident but needs other Knowledges to evidence it, unless we will make all come by Inspiration. Besides, if God's Providence laid in second Causes for Tradition's Indeficiency be not Certain in its self, (abstracting from Christ's promise to his Faithful) Tradition can never convey certainly that Promise to us; It must then be assur'd to us by Scripture's Letter ascertain'd onely by imagin'd diligence from Copy to Copy, not by Tradi-

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tion; that is, that Letter could not be certain its ſelf, and ſo fit to aſcertain others, till Tradition's Certainty be eſtabliſh't antecedently: And, were it ſuppos'd a true Letter, this Letter (Tradition being as yet ſuppos'd unknown to be able to convey down certainly Chriſts ſence) muſt be interpreted onely by private ſkills; and ſo, all the Churches Veracity, that is, all Mankinds Salvation muſt be built on that private Interpretation. *Private*, I ſay; for in that ſuppoſition, till the Scripture's Letter for that point be Interpreted certainly truly, the Churches veracity or power to interpret it truly is not yet known: which, beſides the common Rule that no Scripture is of private Interpretation, is particularly and highly faulty in this caſe, that it would make our Fundamental of Fundamentals, the Certainty of our Rule of Faith, rely on ſuch a private Interpretation. Moreover, to ſay Tradition of the Church is Certain becauſe Chriſt promiſt it, puts it to be believ'd not ſeen; and is the ſame in Controverſy as it is in Nature to ſay in common, ſuch an Effect is wrought *becauſe 'tis God's will*; which gives no account of that particular Effect, but onely ſayes ſomething in common: Wherefore, ſince the Certainty of the Rule of Faith (it being antecedent to Faith) muſt be ſeen not believ'd, a Controverſial Divine ought to make it *ſeen*; that is, ought to demonſtrate its Certainty and Indeficiency by intrinſecal

trinſecal mediums or dependence on proper Cauſes. It ſignifies therefore no more in the Science of Controverſy to ſay *Chriſt promiſt*, than in Natural Science to anſwer to every Queſtion, inſtead of ſhowing a proper Cauſe, that *God wills it*; which is a good ſaying for a Chriſtian, as is alſo the other; but neither of them a competent Principle either for Philoſopher or Controvertiſt.

Conſent
Of
AUTHORITY.

To the ſubſtance of the foregoing Diſcourſes.

1. THus far Reaſon: Let's ſee how 'tis ſeconded by Authority: And firſt by the Scriptures.

2. For the *Self-evidence* of the Way to Faith, or (which is all one) The Rule of Faith, ſee the Prophet *Iſay* c. 35. v. 8. *This ſhall be to you a direct way, ſo that Fools cannot err in it.* That is, *evident to the rudeſt Vulgar*, or *ſelf-evident*; elſe Fools might poſſibly err in it, in caſe it needed any Skill of Diſcourſe and were not obvious to Common Senſe.

3. Now, what this Self-evident Rule is, is moſt expreſſively declar'd by the ſame Prophet c. 59. v. 21. ſpeaking of God's favour intended to the Gentiles,

Gentiles; that is, of the Law of Grace. *This is my Covenant with them, ſaith the Lord, my Spirit which is in thee, and my words which I have put in thy Mouth, ſhall not depart from thy mouth, and from the mouth of thy Seed, and from the mouth of thy Seed's Seed from henceforth for ever.* Here we ſee God's promiſe to perpetuate Chriſt's Doctrin; and on what manner; that is, by Oral Tradition, or Delivering it from Father to Son by *word of Mouth* or Teaching; not by ſcanning a Book put in their hands. We ſee it promiſt alſo that this Tradition ſhall be Indefectible or *Uninterrupted*; and, Laſtly, that his Spirit (or Sanctity) is both in the Church, and will continue ever with her; which being ſo, ſhe muſt needs be ſupernaturally aſſiſted by the Holy Ghoſt (that is, incomparably above the power of Nature) to this Effect of perpetuating Chriſt's doctrin by Tradition.

4. As pithy and home is that of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, c. 31. *I will give my Law in their Bowels, and in their Hearts will I write it*; and ſtill more that of St. *Paul* contradiſtinguiſhing the Law of Grace from *Moſes* his Law by this, that the later was writ *in Tables of Stone*, the former *in the fleſhy Tables of mens Hearts*. Both as expreſs as can be imagined to ſend us for our Faith to living Sence in *the hearts* of the Faithful, not to meer *dead Letters* in a *Book*; that is, recommending to us Tradition, which is the

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perfectest and naturalest way imaginable to write them there, as hath been shown. Note the word *Hearts*, which in the Metaphorical expression is the Principle of Action; not of mere Speculative Knowledge, as is the word *Brain*: Which intimates the *Practical* nature of Tradition; and, that it imprints Christs Law, and conveys it down by Christian Carriage and *Action*; not by *Speculative* scanning the significativeness of Characters in a Book. Note also, the word *Fleshy*; which signifies, that the manner of writing Christ's Law is through the affecting the Soul by her Inferiour part (considering her as she is a virtue of understanding;) that is, by Sensations which make strong and plain Impressions in Mankind according to their material part, and so force into them Natural Knowledge: Whence, things thus imprinted are apt to settle themselves solidly and even sink deeply into the most material, gross and vulgar understandings. Quite contrary to which in all regards is the way of beginning with reading, and labouring to understand certainly, Letters in a Book; which, is a kind of Speculation, and so belongs to the Superiour part of the Soul as she is understanding; being Artificial, both in the very *Nature* of such Characters, the skill in *Reading*, and highest skills requisit to *Sence* them with Certainty.

5. After Scripture-verdict succeed next in order

der those of Councils. I will onely mention three in several Ages, leaving multitudes of others. The first Synod of *Lateran.* *We all confirm unanimously and consequently, with one heart and mouth, the Tenets and sayings of the Holy Fathers; adding nothing, subtracting nothing of those things which are DELIVER·D US* (quæ *TRADITA* sunt nobis) *by them: and we believe so as the Fathers have believed, we preach so as they have TAUGHT.* The Council of *Sardica,* in its Encyclical sent to all Catholick Bishops. *We, have received this Doctrin, we have been taught so, we hold this Catholick Tradition, Faith and Confession.* And the seventh General Council in its second Act. *We imbu'd with the precepts of the Fathers, have so confest and do confess;* In the Third, *we receive and venerate the Apostolical Traditions of the Church.* And in the seventh Act, giving their final determination, they, declare the Grounds on which they proceed in these words. *We, walking in the King's-high-way* (Regiam viam incedentes) *and relying on the Doctrin of our holy and divine Fathers, and observing the TRADITION of the Catholick Church, define,* &c. where we see General Councils (that is, the greatest Authority in the Catholick Church) relying on the *Teaching* of Fathers or foregoing Church, and on the Churches *Tradition* as on their *Rule* and the *High-way to Faith*; whence they repute Catholick Tradition, and Faith,

the ſame thing. We ſee alſo the Amplitude of this Rule, recommending to us *all* Faith, ſo that nothing ought be added to it. And how empty a pretence the Fathers in this Council judg'd it to diſallow this Rule under pretext of being oppoſit to Scripture is ſeen by theſe words in their Firſt Seſſion. *They who contemn the Teachings of the Holy Fathers and TRADITION of the Catholick Church, and bring for their excuſe and inculcate the words of* Arius, Neſtorius, Eutyches, *and* Dioſcorus, *ſaying, Unleſs we were ſufficiently inſtructed out of the Old and New Teſtament, we would follow the Doctrins of the Fathers, of the ſix holy Synods, and the Traditions of the Catholick Church, Let him be accurſed.* So that they held private Inſtruction from Scripture *inſufficient* to build Faith on, or (which is all one) to be *a Rule of Faith*; Alſo, that it was ever the common pretence of the moſt execrable Hereticks of old to decline Tradition, and pretend to *ſufficient Light* from Scripture's Letter; and, laſtly, that ſince the Sence of Scripture in points of Faith is not attainable ſufficiently, or with Certainty, by the bare Letter of Scripture, and with Certainty by Tradition, and that Tradition brings us down determinate Sence; Tradition is to ſence Scripture's Letter; and ſo that Letter no Rule but by virtue of Tradition; ſeeing, Faith being Sence, and Points of Faith determinate Sences, Faith's Rule muſt bring us to ſuch determinate Sences.

6. After

6. After antient Councils, let us give a glance at Fathers, and see what they say to this Point.

Celestin, Saint and Pope to the Fathers of the *Ephesin* Council; *Agendum igitur nunc* &c. *Now therefore we must act with a common endeavour to preserve things believed, and retain'd to this very time by SUCCESSION FROM THE APOSTLES.* Ireneus *cap.* 4. *Quid autem* &c. *But what if the Apostles had not left us the Scriptures, ought we not to follow the Order of Tradition which they had deliver'd to those to whom they committed the Churches. To which Ordination assent many Nations of those Barbarians who believe in Christ, having Salvation writ by the Spirit in their hearts without characters and Ink, and diligently keeping the Ancient TRADITION.* In the former we have it told a General Council what their proper task is; namely to keep or hold fast what was believ'd and kept; and how? *by Succession from the Apostles*, or from hand to hand. In the second, that the Apostles when they gave Bishops their Charge, ordained or made it their Duty to *observe Tradition*; that this Way of Tradition was sufficient to receive Faith upon; that is, sufficient to be a Rule of Faith *without Scripture*; and that *de facto* it did perform that office to *many Nations* without Scripture. Lastly, he calls this delivery from Father to Son *the writing it in their hearts by the Spirit*; that is, the work of the *Holy Ghost* or *Supernatural*, however it connaturally de-

ſcended; and ſeems to counterpoſe this to writing by *characters or Ink*; as if this were not (ſo immediately at leaſt) the Holy Ghoſts work; In regard (as plain reaſon tells us) the Sence of thoſe Letters, or Faith, muſt either be had by thoſe Inward Characters writ in the Readers hearts by God's Spirit; and ſo It, not the Ink writes it there; or elſe by human or Natural Skills, which are not attributable to our Sanctifier, the Holy Ghoſt.

7. The ſame Father (*lib.* 1. *cap.* 3.) For though there be diverſe Tongues in the world, *yet the virtue of Tradition is one and the ſame. The preaching of the Church is true and firm, in which one and the ſame way of Salvation is ſhown over the whole world.* Here we have but one Rule of Faith, or way to Faith, & this the *preaching* or living voice of the Church; which is not onely ſaid to be *true* but alſo *firm*; that is the Certainty of its Truth is built on *ſolid Grounds*, or founded in the nature of things order'd by God's ſpecial Providence to that end. To ſhow which hath been the aim of my preſent endeavours.

8. *Origen* is more expreſs. 1. *Periarchôn, Servetur verò* &c. *Let the Churches preaching deliver'd from the Apoſtles by order of Succeſſion, and remaining in the Church to this preſent be preſerv'd. That onely Truth is to be believ'd, which differs in nothing from the Churches Tradition.* And 29. in *Matth. We ought not to believe otherwiſe than as the Churches*

of

of God have deliver'd us by Succeſſion. Where he directly makes Tradition the Rule to judge what's ſound, what not; that is, *the Rule of Faith.*

9. *Tertullian* lib. *de carne Chriſti. If thou beeſt but a Chriſtian, believe what is* (traditum) *deliver'd.* And, ſpeaking to an Heretick; *By renouncing what thou haſt believ'd thou proveſt that, before thou didſt renounce it, what thou believedſt was otherwiſe: It was then deliver'd otherwiſe: Moreover, what was Deliver'd, that was True, as deliver'd by thoſe to whom it belong'd to deliver; Wherefore, renouncing what was Deliver'd, thou haſt renounc't what's True.* So that in this Father's Judgment a *Chriſtian* and *Follower of Tradition* are the ſame, and that to renounce what comes by *Tradition* is to renounce *Truth*; which amounts to this, that Tradition is the Teſt of Chriſtianity, and *Rule of Faith.* Alſo he intimates that it belongs to ſome to *deliver*, to ſome not; and, if to any, to whom but thoſe who lay claim and adhere to Tradition or *Delivery*, and are in poſſeſſion of it? not to thoſe who are known to have broken from Tradition and impugn its Certainty.

10. *Athanaſius* (in lib. *de Synodis.*) *They have declar'd themſelves to be Unbelievers by ſeeking what they have not; All therefore that are Seekers of Faith are Unbelievers. They onely to whom Faith comes down from their Anceſtors, that is, from Chriſt by Fathers, do not*

ſeek, and therefore they onely have Faith. If thou comeſt to Faith by Seeking, thou waſt before an Unbeliever. And, in his Diſcourſe againſt *Paulus Samoſatenus de Incarnatione. He that ſearches after thoſe things which are beyond his ſtrength ſtands upon a precipice; but he that ſticks to Tradition, ſtands out of danger. Wherefore we perſuade you, which alſo we perſuade our ſelves, that you retain the Faith Deliver'd* (Traditam Fidem) *and avoid prophane words of Novelty.* I wiſh the Proteſtants would ſeriouſly weigh the import of theſe Sayings of this Father, and conſider what it was which ſuſtain'd him who was a Pillar of Faith in his dayes; and then, applying it, ſee whether it fits to Catholicks or Them. They would plainly diſcern that which they prize themſelves moſt for, that is for taking their Faith out of Judgment, by finding and ſeeking it in the Scriptures, is alone enough to ſhow them not to be truly Faithful; That God has promiſed a perfectly *ſecure* way to give them true Faith, that is, by *believing Anceſtours.* That they who do not ſo *ſtand upon a precipice, ſeeking what's beyond their power*; that is, to hammer a certain Faith out of Scripture's Letter by their private Wit. Which reflected on, a little reaſon, enlightned by ſo plain and manifold Experiences, will eaſily tell them that 'tis the ſhallowneſs of their Grounds, unable to ſatisfy Rational Nature, which makes ſo many of theirs take upon them to ſeek for Faith, and ſo leave them;

them; and the ſolid ſecureneſs, connaturalneſs, and ſatisfactorineſs of ours which makes few or none leave us; and thoſe who do, 'tis eaſie to diſcover the motives of their revolting.

11. Yet one more from this Illuſtrious Father; as one whom by reaſon of his Famous Contraſts with the impious *Arians*, it concern'd to be more expreſs in inculcating and ſticking to the true Rule of Faith. He writing to *Epictetus* Biſhop of *Corinth*. *'Tis to be anſwer'd* (ſaith he) *to thoſe things, which alone of it ſelf ſuffices, that thoſe are not of the Orthodox Church, and that our Anceſtours never held ſo.* So that the living Voice of the Church, *Tradition*, or belief of Anceſtours, is held by him a ſole-ſufficient Rule of Faith, and the onely Anſwer to be given why we reject points from Faith, or admit them into It; that is, an *Evident* Reaſon for ſuch a carriage; for otherwiſe another Anſwer would be requiſit.

12. We will be ſhorter in the reſt. *Clemens Alexandrinus Stromatôn 7°. As if one of a man becomes a beaſt, like thoſe infected by Circes poyſon, ſo he hath forfeited his being a man-of-God and Faithful to our Lord, who ſpurns againſt the Churches Tradition, and leaps into Opinions of human Elections.* *Baſil* againſt *Eunomius*: *Wouldſt thou have us all perſwaded by thee, prefer your Conceits before the Tradition of Faith, which perpetually hath conquer'd under ſo many holy men.* And, ſpeaking againſt two other He-

reticks, *Sabellius* and *Arius*; *Let* TRADITION *bridle thee: Our Lord taught thus, the Apostles preach't it, the Fathers conserv'd it, our Ancestours confirm'd it; be content to say as thou art taught.* We have it clear then that the Renouncer of Tradition is none of the Faithful, that is cut off from the Root of Faith (see *Corol.* 4.) that all is men's *Conceits* and *Arbitrary Opinions* (which the word *Hæresie* imports) that is opposit to *Tradition.* We have, lastly, the whole course of our Faith's descent from Christ to us; yet not a word of descending by Scripture or Letters in Books, but by the way of Preaching and Teaching, that is, *Oral delivery* and Sence writ in men's hearts.

13. I omit many other Fathers, but I must not S. *Austin. Ea potius credam*, &c. *I will rather believe* (saith he, *contra Epistolam Fundamenti*) *those things which are celebrated now by the consent of learned and unlearned; and are confirmed throughout all Nations by most grave Authority.* And, again; *'Tis manifest that the Authority of the Catholick Church is of force to cause Faith and Assurance. Which* (Authority) *from the best establisht Seats of the Apostles even to this very day, is strengthened by the Series of Bishops succeeding them, and by the Assertion of so many Nations.* In both places he he makes the consent of *Learned* and *Unlearned*, Bishops and conspiring people, continu'd down to these dayes (that is, the living voice of the Church

Church Essential, or *Tradition*) the most grave Authority, apt to *ascertain* us and cause *Faith*; that is, he makes Tradition the *Rule of Faith*; and builds its strength (as we also do) on the multitude and consent of the Asserters or Testifiers of its descent. Also in his 58. Epistle, *The Faithful* (saith he) *do possess perseveringly a* RULE OF FAITH *common to little and great in the Church.* Where every word is Emphatical; That the Churches voice is the Rule of Faith: That this Rule is common to *Learned* and *Unlearned*; that is, able to satisfie the acutest Discoursers and yet understandable by the rudest vulgar: Lastly, that they hold it, and that perseveringly or unshakenly; which shews it self-evident; else both, the unlearned at least, might come to doubt of it. (See *Disc.* 5. §. 8, 9, 10, 11.

14. Thus much for the credit of Tradition; its being the Rule of Faith, Certain, and Uninterrupted. But how shall we know who enjoyes this Tradition, or what points have been handed down by it from the beginning? Must we not run to Private Expositions of Scripture to be assur'd of this, or at least to Libraries of Books writ in all former Ages to see if perhaps their Authours might have dream'd of our now difficulties, and then propheſi'd us a satisfaction so expres and ample, that no cavil can avoid it? No, we have manifest Certainty of it other wayes, if we may trust the Fathers. We will onely

onely alledge two, both very Antient, and great Masters of Controversy against the Hereticks of their times. S. *Ireneus lib.* 1. *cap.* 3. *All those who will hear Truth may at present perfectly discern* (adest perspicere) *in the Church the Tradition of the Apostles, manifest in the whole World.* That is, the Doctrin of the present Church (proceeding upon or adhering to Tradition) is a *manifest* Argument, that what it teaches *now* was *delivered* by the Apostles. And *Tertullian contra Marcionem. That is manifestly True which is First, that First which is from the beginning, that from the beginning which is from the Apostles. In like manner that will manifestly appear to have been delivered by the Apostles, which shall be established as Sacred in the Churches of the Apostles.* Where first he ascends, and confounds Novelty or Heresie, by shewing that the *Priority* of what they left, argues it to have been *ever* or from the Apostles, and so *True*; and then proves, and *manifestly* too, that that was delivered from the Apostles which is found *established* (that is held to be receiv'd, as all his former Doctrine runs) as sacred in the Churches at present, which were founded by the Apostles. But he is yet more expres in his first Book against the same Heretick, *nothing is to be acknowledg'd a Tradition of the Apostles, but what is at this present day profest* (for such) *in their Churches.* So that he sends us not to Volumes of Histories and other Writers (which

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if Tradition can fail, are of no Authority) to find what was the Antient or Primitive Traditions, or what the Apoſtles taught or *delivered*, but onely to the living Voice of the preſent Churches; which had been but a weak procedure, in caſe their holding now a thing *deliver'd* were not argumentative that it was *deliver'd ever*; which is the ſubſtance of my proof *a poſteriori*, for the Indefectiveneſs of Tradition. And, leaſt it ſhould be imagin'd that this Argument loſes its force by tract of time, or the long-continuance of the Church, *Peter Chryſologus*, in his 85. Sermon, ſecures us from that danger. *A Chriſtian mind knows not how to bring into diſpute thoſe things which are ſtrengthen'd by Tradition of the Fathers, and even* (ipſis temporibus) *by Time it ſelf.* To omit here that he makes it the very temper of a *Chriſtian* mind not to queſtion Tradition, he maintains Continuance of Time, to be ſo far from weakening the Certainty of Traditionary points, that it contributes to ſtrengthen them more. And the reaſon is, becauſe the Churches Doctrin ſpreads by Time, and ſo the ſway of Tradition's deſcent is ampler; beſides that every new Degree of Continuance eſtabliſhes its Title to Poſſeſſion, and makes it hainouſer to revolt from it. And, Effects ſhow our diſcourſe true; for, there were more variety of Hereſies, that is Renouncers of Tradition, in the firſt 400 years after the Apoſtles, than we read of in any 400 years

years since; Nor (that we may use a familiar Instance in Human Tradition) does (I conceive) any man living more doubt now of *Mahomet*: or *Julius Cæsar's* existence, than within an 100 years after they liv'd.

15. A few Notes, well weigh'd, will strengthen the force of these Allegations; which even at first sight seem to look very favourably on our Cause. I mind my Reader then,

First, That almost every Citation alledg'd is of Councils or Fathers speaking directly against Hereticks; that is, in such Circumstances as put them to declare what fixt them Catholicks, and what made the other Hereticks.

Secondly, That though some Fathers and Councils speak highly of Scripture, as that it contains all Faith, *&c.* 'Tis first to be mark't whether they speak of Scripture *Senc't*, or as yet *to be Senc't*; and, if the later, by whom; or whether any Fathers say that Scripture wrought upon by private Interpretation and Human Wit is apt to *ascertain* Faith (or be the *Rule of Faith*) which is the true point between the Renouncers of Tradition and us.

Thirdly, They shall observe it frequent in Fathers to force Hereticks to accept the Sence of Scripture from those who gave them the Letter of Scripture; and very frequent to Sence that Letter (even when dark) by Tradition; but never to bend Tradition to the outward show the Scripture's Letter seems to bear as interpreted by

by human Skills; or to say Upiversal Tradition is insufficient or uncertain, unless the Scripture's Letter thus interpreted came to clear or assist it.

Lastly, 'tis impossible they should hold Scripture thus interpretable the Rule of Faith; it being notorious that most Hereticks against whom they writ, held it theirs; And so had they held Scripture thus interpreted the Rule of Faith, they could not have held them Hereticks, since they adher'd stiffly to that Rule or Root of Faith, however they might err in many particular Tenets. Not to repeat how all the Properties of the Rule of Faith are utterly incompetent to Scripture's Letter.

This done, all the Testimonies for Scripture against Tradition lose their edge. That is (if my discourse also hold the test) it will appear by way of *Fact*, as it did before by Argument that there is neither Reason nor Authority against Tradition. Sothat I have no more to do but to show that ourChurch at present grounds herfaith on Tradition as formerly; which done it follows all the Substance of my foregoing Discourses is but an Explication of our Churches Sence.

16. To know our Churches Sence in this point, we will not fetch our Testimony from private Authours (as is the Protestants mode when they would affix any thing upon her) but we will attend to what her own living voice pronounc't in her late famous Representative, the Council of *Trent*. Where, in every Session

Seſſion definitive of Faith, It profeſſes to follow TRADITION, either in moſt expreſs or equivalent Terms. As, Seſſion 4th. *The Holy Synod clearly ſeeing that this Truth and Diſciplin* (Chriſt's Doctrin) *is contain'd in the written Books and Traditions without writing, which received by the Apoſtles from Chriſt's own mouth; or from the very Apoſtles, the Holy Ghoſt dictating, as it were deliver'd by hands,* (per manus Traditæ,) *have come down to us* &c. And Again, *Alſo the TRADITIONS both belonging to Faith and Manners, as dictated orally by Chriſt or the Holy Ghoſt and conſerved by CONTINUAL SUCCESSION in the Catholick Church* &c. Seſſion 5. *The Holy Council following the Judgment and Conſent of the Church.* Ibid. ℣. 4. *As the Catholick Church where ever diffus'd hath alwayes underſtood it; For by reaſon of this RULE OF FAITH according to the TRADITION of the Apoſtles* &c. Seſſion 6. It profeſſes to *follow that Doctrin which Chriſt taught, the Apoſtles deliver'd, and the Catholick Church, the Holy Ghoſt ſuggeſting, perpetually* (or interruptedly) *retain'd.* Seſſion 7. *The Holy Synod adhering to the Holy Scripture, the Traditions of the Apoſtles, and the Conſent of Councils and Fathers.* Seſſion 13. *The ſound and ſincere doctrin which the Catholick Church hath ever kept, and will ever keep to the end of the World.* And, again, *For ſo ALL OUR ANCESTOURS that ever were in the true*

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Church of Christ most openly have profest. And yet again cap. 3. *This Faith was ever in the Church.* So cap. 4. *It was ever held in God's Church.* More such like Expressions are found in the same Session. But to proceed. Session 14. chap. 1. *The Consent of ALL the Fathers EVER understood* &c. Chap. 5. *The Church of God NEVER taught nor held* &c. Chap. 5. *The Universal Church EVER understood that* &c. Chap. 7. It was ever held in God's Church Chap. 8. *It was PERPETUALLY COMMENDED by our Fathers to Christian people. No Catholick EVER held* &c. And in the same Session concerning Extream Unction, alledging S. *James* his Text, it adds, *By which words AS THE CHURCH HATH LEARNED BY TRADITION RECEIV'D DOWN BY HANDS, he teacheth* &c. And Can. 3. *As the Catholick Church EVER understood from the beginning* &c. Can. 6. *Which the Catholick Church ever observ'd from the beginning, and doth observe* &c. Session 21. chap. 1. The Council professes *to follow the Judgment and CUSTOME of the Church.* Chap. 2. It declares *that this power has PERPETUALLY been in the Church.* Session 22. *That the antient Faith and doctrin may be retain'd in the Church.* Ibid. cap. 1. *As the Catholick Church EVER understood and taught.* Chap. 1. *According to Apostolical TRADITION.* Session 23. *Holy Writings show it, and the TRADITION of the Catholick Church ever taught it.* Chap. 2.

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They are known to have been in use from the very Beginning of the Church. Session 24. *The Holy Fathers, Councils and the UNIVERSAL TRADITION of the Church have ALWAYES taught.* And speaking of some Errors, It pronounces them *different from the Catholick Church, and from the CUSTOME approved SINCE THE APOSTLES TIME.* Session 25. *The Catholick Church instructed by the Holy Ghost, teaches out of Sacred Writings and the ANTIENT TRADITION of the Church,* &c. *According to the use of the Catholick and Apostolick Church* [*TRADITAM*] *deliver'd from the first* (or Primitive) *times of Christian Religion,* &c. More Expressions of the like strain are found in this Session. And, to close up all, in their Acclamation they use this form of words: *This is the Faith of Blessed* Peter, *this is the Faith of the Fathers, this is the Faith of the Orthodox.* From which Testimonies, note we.

17. First, That the Council in every Session, (not one excepted) where Points of Faith are handled, constantly professes to follow *TRADITION.*

Secondly, It layes claim perpetually to *Uninterruptedness* of this Tradition, as appears by the words, *ever, alwayes, from the Apostles times, from the beginning, from the Apostles have come down by hands to us, The Church hath alwayes understood, held, openly profest, taught, hath ever kept, and will ever keep, perpetually com-*

commended by our Fathers, hath learned by Tradition received down by hand, hath ever observed, and such like. Plainly showing that this Persuasion of our Faith's descent *uninterruptedly* is deeply and unanimously rooted in the heart of the whole Catholick Church. Which strengthens our Doctrin, *Disc.* 8. §. 2. and 3.

3ly. It makes the Suggestion of the Holy Ghost, or Sanctity in the hearts of the Faithful, efficacious to perpetuate the delivery of received Doctrin. See Sess. 6. *Decreto de Justificatione*, Sess. 13. *de SS. Euchar. Sacramento*, and many other places. The very point I went about to explicate in my 9. Discourse.

4ly. 'Tis observable that though it mentions the Holy Scriptures also with Tradition, yet this is both very rarely, and when it does so It onely expresses that Faith is *contained* in them; but when it brings Places of Scripture to ground Definitions upon, It perpetually professes to Interpret them by Tradition; Which is most Evident both by its decreeing this in common. Sess. 4. *That none dare to interpret Holy Scriptures against the Sence which our Holy Mother the Church hath held and does hold*; meaning that *Sence* in the Hearts of the Faithful is the Rule to interpret Scripture by, (see *Corol.* 30.) As also by several Instances; Sess. 5. §. 4. Sess. 14. Can. 3. Sess. 22. cap. 1. and (to omit others) in that most remarkable place Sess. 14. In which after the Text of S. *James* alledg'd for Extream

Unction, the Council subjoins, *In which words, as the Church hath learn'd by Apostolical Tradition received down by hands, he teaches*, &c. Where *Tradition* is most evidently made the Rule which instructs and guides the Church in interpreting Scripture: And 'tis observable that the Council no where grounds any definition on Scripture, but at the same time she grounds her Interpretation of Scripture on Tradition; which devolves into this that the Council makes Tradition her onely Rule to know *Certainly* Christ's Sence, or Points of Faith; that is, (in proper speaking) *the onely Rule of Faith.*

18. But why then is the Holy Scripture made use of at all by the Council, and that so solemnly; nay, and (which is to be noted) constantly put before Tradition? To satisfy fully this difficulty 'tis not the proper season at present; yet, being a good point and worth clearing, I will not totally neglect it. We may observe then that when we read any Book writ by an Authour we much esteem, but yet such a Book as requires studying, (*Aristotle's* for Example, or some other such whom we hold Scientifical,) we sometimes hope well (as it were) when we apply our own Industry to find out his meaning, and have a kind of respect for what we conceive to be his Sence; yet his Authority takes not full hold of our Understanding, by reason the way we take is not evidently convictive that this is his Certain Sence; But if the Point he writes on be

be first clear'd to us through a Scientifical discourse by word of mouth, made by some Interpreter vers'd in his Doctrin and perfectly acquainted with his meaning, we have as it were new Eyes given us to look deeply and thoroughly into his Sence; and, by this Security of arriving at it, his Authority (in case we highly esteem'd it) has now its full force upon us to strengthen our Assent, according to the degree of power it had upon our Understanding. Now, what a well-skill'd and insighted Interpreter or scientifical Explicater of the point is to such an Author, the same is *Tradition* to Scripture. For, This bringing down Certainly Christ's Sence in every Point of Faith, It easily and securely guides us to the true meaning of Scripture in those passages which concern such a point; whereas, the wordish way of Grammar and Criticism being evident by Principles to be ambiguous, and by Experience to lead men into different Sences, it can never satisfy us thoroughly that the Sence we arrive at by this method is infallibly the true one or Christs, and so never engages certainly the Authority of GOD'S WORD. And, hence it is that Scripture thus interpreted is of sleight force, and at best good onely for Ecclesiastical Rhetorick or Sermons; where the concern is not much if the Preacher misses in this particular passage so the Substance of the Point he preaches on, or his Text, be truly Christ's doctrin; nor is Scri-

pture thus interpreted even a competent proof in the Science of *School-Divinity*, as being Uncertain and so unapt to beget Science; whence, Intelligent Divines quoting and building on Scripture are to be suppos'd to judge the Sence they build on to be the Churches, and so they are presum'd to go to work as Faithful, or parts of *Ecclesia docens*; or else they lay true Science first, which is ever agreeable to Faith; and so, when any Text concerns a demonstrated point, they know by Science what the true Sence of that Point must be. Much less is Scripture wordishly interpreted apt to build Faith on; the unwaveringness of which kind of Assent must be grounded and secure in the Principles which beget it, and not meerly actually such as it were by accident; whereas Interpretations thus made (Faith's Principles in this case) are liable to possible if not probable mistake. This will be clearer by a parallel made by a learned Authour worth inserting, because it strengthens our Discourse by a new Consideration. Let a Critick and a skill'd *Carpenter* read *Vitruvius* his Book of Architecture, the Critick has but a dim, dry and uncertain conceit of what he reads as to the truth of the thing; but the *Carpenter* or Architect, by reason of some Principles and Practice he has already of those matters, understands him more thoroughly, and makes lively and firm conceits of the truth and excellency of what he writes; Such

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is the Practical way of knowing Christs Sence, or Tradition, to the interpreting Scripture, us'd by the Catholick Church; in comparison of the Critical Method affected by others. In a word, Tradition gives us *Christs Sence*, that is, the *Life* of the Letter ascertaind to our hands, which therefore must needs move the Letter, its Body, naturally; The other way takes the dead Letter, and endeavours to move it Artificially to counterfeit that Life which it truly wants.

19. To apply this Discourse to our matter in hand. Tradition securing to us the Scripture's Letter truly significative of Christ's Sence, and also the true Sence of that Letter in Points of Faith *deliver'd*, (See *Coroll.* 29. & 30) it follows that Scripture alledged by the Church relying on Tradition for its Rule, engages certainly and fully the very Authority of the Divinely inspir'd Writer himself; and gives that Testimony the whole Effect upon our understanding, which that Sacred Writers Authority deserves to have given it. No wonder then the Council, proceeding upon Traditionary Interpretation as it constantly declares it self to do, honours Scripture-Testimony so as to put it before Tradition or the delivery of Christs Doctrin from hand to hand: Scripture, thus alledg'd and secur'd, having the same force as if the Apostle or Evangelist himself should sit in the Council, and

by way of living voice declar'd his own Sence in the matter; to whom, thus present, what deference the Council would have given is obvious to be imagin'd. Hence, also, the Protestant may see what high esteem our Church gives to *Gods Word*, truly so calld; that is, having Gods Sence certainly known to be such, in its and that 'tis onely the outward Letter as us'd to hammer a Faith out of by wordish skills, that is, indeed, their Method of interpreting it (which, by reason of its Uncertainty falls short of engaging the Sacred Authority of *Gods Word*) we sleight and scorn: And most justly, since 'tis the having no better way to work on Scripture, which has brought Scripture it self, thus us'd, to scorn and contempt; as appears in the carriage of our *Bedlam* of new Sects in *England*. I expect here some mighty man of talk, but very weak Speculator, should object that this is an excellent way to bring all into our Churches hands: But till he can prove that both Letter & Sence of Scripture are knowable, with such a Certainty as to build on them that most firm Assent call'd Faith, by any other way than this of Tradition, I can neither hinder my Inferences nor will he ever be able to confute my discourse.

20. Thus much to show evidently that the Substance of the Doctrin we have given in our former Discourses, is the very Sence of our Church at present; and that her present Sence

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in this matter is agreeable to the Judgment of Antient Fathers and Councils. I have no more to do now but to ſhow that at the very time of the Breach here in *England*, the Catholick was found adhering faſt to this Rule of *Tradition*, renounc't by the Proteſtant. This is evident by the Proteſtants own confeſſion; For, as oft as you hear them alledge that *England* was formerly overgrown with Popery, that the new Light of the Goſpel hath of late diſcovered it ſelf, that they reform'd in Faith, that the former Church errd, and ſuch like expreſſions which naturally muſt burſt out from them, ſo oft you hear them acknowledge themſelves Deſerters of Tradition and Innovators. Which Expreſſions of theirs (by the way) eaſily manifeſt to the moſt vulgar underſtanding who 'tis that hath renounct Tradition; whence, it being alſo eaſily evidenceable to the rudeſt capacity that Tradition is a moſt certain way of bringing down Faith (*Diſc.* 5. §. 8.) the moſt vulgar Soul is capable of knowing which Profeſſion it is to follow. For the two former points being known, they are Certain by motives within their own Ken, that Proteſtants have renounct the Certain way to bring down Faith; but that we renounct Tradition of old is unacknowledged by us, diſputable, and onely knowable by ſkills they are not Maſters of. Common Senſe then teaching them they muſt guide themſelves

by reasons they are capable of, and not by reasons of which they know nothing, and that God requires no more at their hands than they can do, Gods goodness has provided for those weak people, out of the very Confessions of Tradition's deserters, Certain means to judge whether they ought to be Catholicks or Protestants. But, to return whence we diverted.

21. It is not onely the Protestants own Confession, but the open Profession of the Catholick Clergy in the very nick of the Breach manifests our claim and constant adherence to Tradition. Whose Declaration, found in the Synodal Book, 1559. begins thus. *Because by relation of publick Fame, it hath lately come to our knowledge that many Points of Christian Religion, hitherto received and approved by the Publick and Uniformious Consent of Christian Nations, and* BROUGHT DOWN BY HANDS *even from the Apostles to Us, are call'd into doubt: Therefore*, &c. Where we find them stick firmly to Tradition; And, insisting on this Principle, they proceed to make a Profession of their Faith, which they exhibit to the Bishops to be given to the Lord Keeper; but the State by power overbearing the Votes of the Reverend Convocation, and persecuting them for their constancy, the Breach ensued. The Catholick cleaving fast to his Old Rule *Tradition*; the Protestants chusing

chuſing a new one of Scripture privately interpreted; whoſe vanity a little reaſon makes them ſee, but experience perfectly find; and relinquiſhing the Antient Rule ſo demonſtrably ſelf-evident, ſecure and ſolid; By which means they became cut off from the onely Certain way to know Chriſts Sence, that is from the Root of Faith, and conſequently from the Body of the Church; The Guilt of which Fact neither Human Authority, Multitude, Proſperity, Continuance, nor yet all their Voluminous wordiſh Excuſes will ever be able to Efface.

ANIMADVERSIONS

On

Dr. *Pierce's* Sermon: Also, on Mr. *Whitby* and Mr. *Stillingfleet*, where they touch the Way lay'd in the foregoing Discourses.

In

Three Appendixes.

Psalm. 63.

Sagittæ parvulorum factæ sunt Plagæ eorum.

Anno Dom. 1665.

ANIMADVERSIONS.

TRANSITION

To

The following

APPENDIXES.

I Have finisht my Discourse: how dexterously must be determin'd by the Judgment of my Readers, and Confutation from my Adversaries. But I account those onely my proper Judges & competent Adversaries who lay their Principles ere they discourse, and weigh the efficaciousness of their Testimonies in the Scales of Reason ere they alledge them. If I find a man laying no Principles of his own, but supposing them, and making account all men must admit them out of respect to him or his party, and yet bend all his endeavours to cavil at Principles laid by others to ascertain and establish the Groundwork of Christianity; If I find one ignorant of or resolv'd against the onely-Certain method and Rule of Discourse, which is, that No Position deserves Assent unless the Connexion of its Terms be Evident, *which must either be when they are Evidently connected of themselves (of which nature ought to be all First Principles) or made evidently-connected by the interposition of some other, which we call Evident-by-consequence or Deduction: Lastly, if I find a man*

so

wedded to Parrat-talk of Ayr and Sounds that he thinks it a rare thing to load margents with Citations, without first distinguishing them and considering what strength each ought to have according to rational Principles; I decline such an empty Soul for my Judge, and sleight him as mine Adversary. And lest any should impute this carriage to me for fastidiousness I offer my Reason for it. For, to cavil at Principles and yet go about to lay none himself, is the method of a Sceptick; and from him indeed I must suffer it; if I cannot force him to hold his tongue: But, that one who pretends himself a Christian, that is a Holder of Christ's Law, that is (if he goes consequently) a Relier upon some First or Self-evident Principle for holding that Christ said this or thus, should be permitted to impugn Principles brought to ascertain fundamentally that point, and yet himself lay none to do that Effect (as is the Custome of the Impugners of Tradition) is to let him behave himself like a Renouncer of Christianity, and to fight against any assuredness of Christianity; that is, to contradict himself and all his own positions as he is Christian; which permission is unreasonable according to Maxims of Common Sence, and illegal by the Rules of true Logick. Again, if the clear light of Understanding gives it manifest, that nothing can be seen intellectually but what is either Evident by its own Light or by Deduction in the manner declared, 'tis as Evident that to frame

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Diſcourſes in another method than this, or at leaſt looſe Diſcourſes that have no Connexion involv'd in them, enabling them to bear the Teſt of this Method, can be onely to talk Uncertainties, that is, of we know not what: Which is unworthy a Man, *much more a Scholler. And, laſtly, Since it is evident by Reaſon that every ſleight Authority is not comparable to that of God's Church, 'tis Evident likewiſe that Reaſon is to weigh what is due to Authorities; and that,* No Authority deſerves any Aſſent further than Reaſon gives it to deſerve. *Now, this being ſo, to alledge Authorities undiſtinguiſhingly, whereas there is ſuch diverſity of degrees in them that perhaps there are no two to be found perfectly alike in merit, is ſuch a wild proceeding hand over head, ſuch a careleſs ſaying any thing to no imaginable purpoſe but purely to talk, that no ſober Diſcourſer can think it fit to ſpend time in combating ſuch an aiery Adverſary.*

2. *I make it my requeſt to my intelligent Reader (for I write to none but ſuch) that he would reflect back on the Method I have taken in my ſhort Diſcouſe; and he will ſee that (however my Performance ſpeeds) I purſue the* Way *of Evidence, and aim at leaſt at perfect Science of the point in hand. He will ſee I take my riſe at the meaning of the words* Rule *and* Faith; *this known, I eſtabliſh my firſt Principles in this preſent matter to be theſe,* a Rule is a Rule, Faith is Faith; *hence I proceed to diſcover diverſe Attributes neceſſary*

ceſſarily connext with what is meant by thoſe two words; and if, to avoid witty cavil, I decline the pretence of rigorous Definitions of either word, without preſſing the Eſſentialneſs of any of thoſe Attributes to the Natures of Rule *and* Faith, *I hope I ſhall merit both pardon and thanks from thoſe who look for ſatisfaction; For, as long as thoſe Attributes muſt neceſſarily accompany the Rule of Faith, I do my work without engaging into nicer diſquiſitions. Thoſe Attributes being ſhown neceſſarily connected with the notion of* Rule of Faith, *I apply'd them to my matter in hand by means of theſe two Propoſitions, bearing a neceſſity of Truth in their very Terms;* That is not the Rule of Faith to which Attributes neceſſarily belonging to the Rule of Faith belong not; *and,* That is the Rule of Faith to which Properties belonging onely to ſuch a Rule do belong. *Hence I reject* Scripture's Letter *from being that Rule, and aſſert* Tradition *to be it. And this was enough perhaps for me to do if I onely minded oppoſition to thoſe who adhere to Scripture's Letter for their Rule, in contradiſtinction and oppoſition to Traditions being ſuch.*

3. *But, intending to avail my ſelf and my Cauſe by the Strength of Truth and Reaſon not the Weakneſs and Paſſion of others, I went forwards (having firſt ſhown it clearly Self-evident that Tradition was a moſt Certain Rule, if follow'd) endeavouring to demonſtrate the Indefectiveneſs of Tradition, or that it was ever follow'd; and this*

this I attempted by those means. I took the allow'd Definition of Man (the Subject of the Effect I was to shew) which was to be a Rational Creature. I found the proper Agent or Efficient to work upon him as such to be Motives or Reasons; and from the impossibility of any such Motives to make him prevaricate from openly-deliver'd Faith, nay the necessity of seeing he must destroy his Credit without any possibility of compassing his End; I endeavour'd to conclude that Faith thus descended was never prevaricated from. Then, taking the way of demonstrating the same a posteriori, I took an Effect I conceiv'd Impossible to be introduc't into a Knowing Nature without the Existence of Tradition's ever-Indeficiency to ingraft it there, or rather to imbue Souls with it naturally, and, as it were, ex traduce.

4. Seeing by this time that my Discourse, by stooping from my First Principles while I apply'd them to my business, seem'd immerst in matter, and, by the blunder of many more and more particular Terms than were in the meer Principle forci'ly taken in, began to look with a contingent Face (though indeed I still perch't upon the specifical natures of Things, and so never flagg'd below the Sphere of Science) therefore to comfort the Readers understanding apt to grow turbid by my approach towards Practice, I consider'd Tradition practically and open'd the nature of it, by reflecting connaturally how the Revolt from it which we call Heresy comes to be originiz'd. For the same rea-

ſon I compar'd the Human force of Chriſtian Tradition with another vaſt Tradition meerly human; & then touching at ſome Divine Aſſiſtances, ſhow'd how the Authour of Nature had eſtabliſh't the beſt piece of it, Man's Nature, by particular means exceeding her own native ſtrength, to this Effect of preſerving the deſcent of Chriſt's doctrin unalterable and uninterrupted; that is, I ſhow'd Tradition moſt Certain and moſt Indefective, and far beyond the eſtabliſhment of any other piece of Natural Science whatſoever.

5. *Laſtly, obſerving that my Diſcourſe by proceſs (as the cuſtom is in all Diſcourſes, however evident, if not bound to Syllogiſtical form) began to look diſhevel'd, I added diverſe Corollaries; In ſome of which I made many ſeveral ends of it meet in a cloſer frame; in others I advanc't forwards to ſhow that the Churches Unity, power to oblige and govern her Subjects as Faithful, and her Infallibility in the whole and ſeveral parts of her was founded in Tradition; nay that by means of Tradition She enjoyes a wonderful Sacredneſs of Authority, being not onely unexpugnable but alſo unimpugnable without deſtroying all kinds of Certainty; that is, without higheſt nonſence in the Oppoſer. And hence I ſeat TRADITION in her Throne; demonſtrating her they the* First, *and conſequently* ſelf-evident, *Principle in affairs of this Nature; and therefore that the Knowledge of her Certainty is* the First Principle in the Science of Controverſy.

6. *This*

6. *This tenour of my Discourse briefly reflected on, I beg of my intelligent Reader to regard it once more in the bulk, and he will see that I begin with Self-evident Principles; That my Principles are antecedent to Authorities, and so are competent means to judge Authorities by; that I studiously avoid wordish ambiguity, which Rhetorical Discoursers ly open to, holding rigorously to the notion or meaning of the words; that I lay but the meaning of two familiar words,* Rule *and* Faith, *for the* basis *of all my Discourse; that I endeavour to pursue my Principles by very obvious and immediate connexions; that all the way I attend heedfully to and build upon the Natures of the Things; which, in short, devolves to this, that it may be hop't (at least by my method) that there needs nothing but Time and Industry to frame and make up in rigorous demonstrative form, that sence which I have here deliver'd in a way more suitable to the temper of the World and ease of my Readers; who may see Evidence in my Discourse, without being oblig'd to bend their brains to study my Book with that severity as they would do an* Euclid.

7. *When this is done, let my Reader reflect on all the Discourses concerning Faith made by any Protestant, and see how far they are short from (I will not say any such performance, but) even an Attempt of Evidence. First Principles they lay none; and consequently Evidence of Deduction cannot be expected from them: for, wanting First Prin-*

ciples, 'tis nonſence and folly to talk of deducing. Again, For want of ſuch Principles, they want Certainty of any Text of Scripture to juſtify it againſt an Atheiſt or Deiſt. They want Self-evident Principles to guide them in interpreting their Uncertain Letter, and ſo confute other Sects which differ from their Church; and the method they take to do it is evidently quite of another nature than Scientifical. They have nothing upon account of Living Teachers which aſcertain Sence; ſo that you muſt to find your Faith not build upon the ſence of two or a few familiar words, but of an whole large Book; that is, on millions of words, and thoſe too not onely unſenc't, but alſo very abſtruſe and myſterious. They ſuppoſe all which is antecedent to Faith, that is all Principles which are to induce Faith and ſo make no Proviſion for the Grounds of Chriſtianity againſt Heathens and Atheiſts: The Natures of Things they are ſo far from proceeding upon, that they not ſo much as mind or think of them, nor I douht fancy or value that method when ſet before their eyes. Principles to weigh each Teſtimony by they lay none, and ſo quote at randome. Certainty they ſeek not, nor care for; for they quote the Fathers and Scripture as by themſelves interpreted, and yet neither hold the Teſtimony of Fathers Infallible nor yet themſelves in interpreting Scripture; yet plaineſt reaſon tells us, that unleſs the Fathers or themſelves were Infallible hic & nunc *in this ſaying or interpretation, they were* hic &

nunc

nunc *Fallible*; *that is, all built on that Testimony or Interpretation is contingent and Uncertain: Yet of such Citations no better authoriz'd, clad perhaps in some fine words, the Books of their best Champions are made up. So that they are convinc't not to study Things, but Words; that is, not to be Scholars or Knowers, but Empty Talkers; and so the effict of their endeavours can never be satisfaction to an intelligent soul, but onely tickling the Ear or pleasing the Fancy.*

9. *As I have shown this Ungrounded proceeding of the Protestants by Principles, so I intend to do the same by Instances: but ere I go about this undertaking, I think fit to meet with an Objection obvious to many Readers. 'Tis this; that, 'Tis strange all Catholicks do not take this way, it being so conclusive, as well as I.*

10. *I answer, that all Truths being connected, 'tis evident each Truth, even for being such, is maintainable several wayes; especially Supreme and very concerning ones: Amongst which wayes, some are sutable to some capacities, others to others. Wherefore Catholick Controvertists esteeming themselves Debtors both* Sapientibus, *or to those who judg of things* per altissimas causas; *and* Insipientibus, *or those who do not so, nor fly higher than a prudential pitch: and the later of these being the Generality; hereupon the Charity and Prudence of those learned Opposers of* Dr. Pierce (*and very many others*) *have thought fit to address to These by answering his Testimonies particularly;*

leaving me the way of Reason and Principles; though in danger to receive much disadvantage by my imperfect delivery, and securer under the managery of their abler heads and pens. I declare therefore that I intend no confutation of any of those Authours, nor to share in the victory of those excellent Champions of Truth: It being perhaps needless to the Generality (however very satisfactory to examining Wits) to confute that in Common which is already confuted by Retail. I write more against their Way than their Books. Yet, if any will be so charitable as to judge my short hints to bear the force of a solid Confutation, because they radically and fundamentally overthrow all their Arguments and very Method of arguing, if it be Truth's advantage, I shall give God thanks for it and be glad of it. But the main is, it imports not in maintaining Truth what others do or do not; but, if it be shown that Catholick Principles (I mean the living voice of the Catholick Church, or Tradition, our Rule of Faith) can bear such a rigorous test of Reason, and appear more lustrous and bright by so severe a trial; and, on the contrary, that the Principles of the Revolters from her are so little solid, so volatil and meerly made up of Fancy, that they evaporate into ayr and even shrink into nothing when set in the mid-day beams of Truth, the Rules of Evidence; I desire no higher an honour to the Catholick Church, nor deeper discredit to her Adversaries,

FIRST

FIRST APPENDIX.

Animadverſions on the Groundleſneſs of Dr Pierce's *Sermon.*

1. LOoking about for Inſtances of Proteſtants Books moſt proper to be confuted by my former Doctrin, my thoughts pitcht naturally on Mr *Whitby*'s, where he goes about to ſettle rationally his Rule of Faith, and on Mr *Stillingfleet's*, where he oppoſes the way of Reaſon, and the Certainty of Tradition. But it ſeem'd convenient to take to task alſo ſome Adverſary who inſiſted on Teſtimonies, and bring him to Grounds; becauſe, in the way of Reaſon which brings Teſtimonies to Grounds, to confute one is in a manner to confute all. Dr *Hamond* ſeem'd proper; but his Book is now out of vogue, if it were ever in it; for I never heard paſt two or three perſons ſpeak of it: and, I am ſure, the beſt Proteſtant Wits of our Nation never valued him as a ſmart and efficacious Writer. Beſides, the Notes I have lately given upon the Fathers Teſtimonies, leave little in him to be reply'd to, and my *Diſcourſes* have left nothing at all. Amongſt late Adverſaries then, Dr *Dentons* folly ſeem'd ſo *ultra crepidam*, that it was not worth a ſerious thought; and 'tis wholly anſwer'd by declaring that he begins and grounds his whole Book on ſo knaviſh a Calumny, that, could the Univerſality

of Catholicks have the ſame Law againſt him, that a private Proteſtant, though the meaneſt in the Kingdome, might freely have, he would loſe his Ears for Libelling. The *Diſſuader* for his plauſibleneſs (not for his ſtrength of ſence) ſeem'd to require a larger Anſwer than was ſutable to the deſign of an Appendix. Dr *Pierce* was of higheſt vogue, and ſhort; but he was already ſo doubly overthrown by two Learned Oppoſers, that it ſeem'd unhandſome and ignoble to ſtrike a man when he was down; his Circumſtances making him rather an Object of Pity than Victory. Yet his Pulpit-alarum to excite all *England* to perſecute Catholicks was ſo full of malice, and ſo monſtrouſly cry'd up, that I judg'd it above all others deſerving to be made an Example of ungrounded Talk. Though I ſhall do it with that compaſſion as not ſo much to confute him, as by laying a few Notes as Admonitions to him, to open his Underſtanding and enable him to look into the force of his own Citations, and ſo to guide himſelf better the next time he goes about to quote Authors; a point I doubt he as yet never thinks on. They may alſo give his Defender (now, as I hear, writing) ſome light to ſtrengthen his Teſtimonies againſt us. I am ſure they will tend to clear Truth, not to blunder it; and ſo all ingenuous ſeekers of ſatisfaction will thank me for them. To begin then,

2. The whole ſcope of his Sermon expreſt in the Title of it, *The Primitive Rule of Reforma-*

tion, causes my first Admonition. For, since we both agree that the Primitive Faith is to be held to, and only differ about the *Certain means* to come to know what that Faith was; we holding to Tradition and to Fathers and Councils (which are, taken properly, parts of Tradition) as Certain means to know that Faith; The Protestants to private Interpretations of Scripture, and to Citations quoted on any fashion; The way to confute us Catholicks is to demonstrate the Certainty of the *way* they take to prove their Faith the same with the Primitive; otherwise, let them talk and write as long as they will, they are never the neerer their Conclusion. Now, if plain Experience tells us the *Smectymnuans* too preacht and writ against Episcopacy by quoting Fathers and Scripture, let Dr *Pierce* show us what his way of Talking has above theirs which gives it a virtue of ascertaining or perfectly settling the understanding; or confess theirs (and so his too) is fallible and frivolous. To *demonstrate* then against us, and so confute us, he ought rather have insisted on a *derivative* Rule, or a Rule able to derive down to them Christ's Faith with Certainty; so to make out their *present* knowledge, which alone can justifie their present or late Action of *Reforming*; and not run afar off to a Primitive Rule or Faith, which is nothing to the Protestants, unless they can prove Certainly they follow it. When D. *Pierce* makes a Sermon at Court upon the Certainty of such a

Rule,

Rule, we will all become Auditours, ſo he will promiſe to begin with firſt Principles, and bring Evidence of what he ſayes: Till then let him take heed of bragging in print of *Demonſtrations*, until he knows what the word means: that is, till he reflects how a Demonſtration is a Proof which obliges the Underſtanding, and conſiders or ſtudies wherein the virtue by which it performs this, conſiſts. Such bold and careleſs talk has coſt his Credit dear already; and when it comes to be ſcann'd by Principles and Science, will leave it quite bankrupt.

3. We have ſeen the End and Scope of D. *Pierce*'s Performance, which is, to over-leap all that concern'd him to prove, if he would conclude with Certainty againſt us; Now, *the uſefulleſt part of his whole performance*, as he ſayes in his Dedication, are his *Citations*, as being the *Evidence and Warrant of all the reſt*; which therefore (if any thing) deſerve to be conſider'd.

Their faults diſtinguiſh them into ſo many ſorts.

Of the firſt ſort are thoſe which are impertinent to our (or indeed to any) purpoſe, but to make a noiſe or vaporing ſhow.

Of the ſecond, thoſe which are raw or unapply'd, and onely ſay ſomthing in common which never comes home to the point.

Of the third, thoſe which are levell'd blindly at none knows what, or at a queſtion unſtated; and ſo are ſhot at rovers.

Of

Of the fourth, Thoſe which impugn a Word for a Thing; or ſome Circumſtance or Manner for the Subſtance.

Of the fifth, Negative Teſtimonies.

Of the ſixth, A private Authours ſaying againſt the torrent of a contrary conſent; which, of it ſelf, is liable to innumerable contingencies of paſſion, miſtake or ignorance; but, thus compar'd, ſignifies leſs than nothing. The like is to quote a Schoolman or two for a point which others freely contradict.

Of the ſeventh, thoſe which are falſe, and ſignifie not the thing they are expreſly quoted for.

Of the eighth, thoſe which labour of obſcurity by an evidently ambiguous word.

Of the ninth, Sayings of thoſe on his own ſide.

Of the tenth, a few fragments of Scripture, ſenc't by Fancy.

4. I intend not to muſter up one by one all his Citations and then rank them under their reſpective Heads, the brevity of an Appendix not permitting it: But, I make this fair proffer to his Vindicater or himſelf, that if they pleaſe to pitch upon any Teſtimonie of his which falls not under ſome one (perhaps many) of theſe Faulty Common-places, I will yeild them all valid and concluſive, and make him publick ſatisfaction for the Injurie.

Having thus given my bond for the Truth y charge, and under ſo great a penaltie upon

upon failure of being so, I have Title to free licence to suppose my charge good, (which will also appear shortly in common by my §. 9.) and accordingly to apply my reason to consider his Citations. I discourse then thus, and Note.

6. First, That Citations are of two sorts; the one alledges the Testifiers Knowledge by Eye-sight or Infallible Sense; the other his Judgment or Opinion. Now this later, in regard mens Judgments or Opinions depend on Reasons, is not properly that Authours Testimonie, nor he a Witness (who ought to proceed upon Evidence had by Senses) but a Schollar or Relier on his Reasons; and, so, his expressing himself in the words found in such a Citation has no Authority further than his Reason gives him; which Reason therefore and not his Saying ought to be alledg'd: in regard it was meerly by vertue of his Reason he *knew* this; and so the whole vertue of his Authority (which follows and goes paralel to *Knowledge*) consists in that Reason. None therefore are properly Testimonies, but those which relie on Sensitive Knowledge: and those are of Certain Authority, if the sincerity of the Testator be unquestionable, and the conveyance of his sincerely-meant Knowledge to us be Evident; not otherwise.

2ly. Note secondly, that, for the reason given, Citations from Adversaries, and Opinators signifie nothing; also those whose words presumed

to

to expreſs the Witneſſers ſence are Ambiguous, or otherwiſe-interpretable; or elſe their very Letter Uncertain; as all are, if the way of Tradition be held fallible.

Thus much in common of Citations as in themſelves. Conſidering them next as made uſe of by D. *Pierce*, we finde he relies on them as on his *Principles* to *conclude* againſt us, or as he (good man) unfortunately calls it, *Demonſtrate*. Hence.

3ly. They muſt not be *Negative*; for ſuch can conclude nothing.

4ly. They muſt not be falſe or evidently ſignifying another thing than they are produc't for, nor impertinent; for then they are in both caſes quite beſides the purpoſe.

5ly. They muſt be expreſs and home to the point; for, Principles muſt need nothing but themſelves (beſides the Application) to infer the Concluſion pretended to ſpring from them.

9ly. They muſt be void of ambiguity. For, Principles muſt be either ſelf-evident, or at leaſt made evident, ere they can deſerve to be produc't or admitted as ſuch.

Laſtly, Principles are *Sence*, not *Sounds* or *Characters*; and ſo their *Sence* ought to be Indiſputable.

7. The firſt Note evacuates at once all his Citations from Authours that concern any point between us. For he brings no Certainty of any knowledge expreſt to be built on Senſe; that is

no

no Citation against us, which, in proper speech, deserves to be call'd a *Testimony*.

The second Note particularly invalidates those of the eighth and ninth sorth.

The third, those of the fifth sort.

The fourth, those of the first and seventh.

The fifth, those of the five first sorts, and also those of the seventh.

The sixth, those of the second, third, and particularly the eighth.

The last Note enervates the tenth, and indeed almost all the rest. It being evident that our learned Controvertists give other Sences to those Citations than what Protestants assigne them, and maintain still those sences to be better than theirs.

8. In a word, seeing all Testimonial Authority supposes Knowledge in the Authour, and all Knowledge is either from Sense (call'd *Experience*) or else from evident connexion of Term (or Reason) and that this later knowledge is apt to make a Master, that is, one fit to convince and teach another rationally by Intrinsecal Mediums or to cause *Science* in him, and so is unfit for *Testifying*: And the former kind of Knowledge onely is fit to be an Extrinsecal Medium or apt to beget Belief of the Witnesses word (in regard any person, unacquainted otherwise with the Truth of the Point, knows by ordinary Experience and common reason that mens Understandings may err, but their Sences rightly circum-

circumſtanc't, cannot ;) it follows that no Citation in proper ſpeech deſerves the name nor has the force or virtue of a Teſtimony but thoſe which are built on Sence or Experience. This weigh'd, reflecting on the main, I find not one Expreſs Teſtimony againſt any point of our Faith, engaging Senſe; that is, not one which merits the name of a Teſtimony or to be eſteem'd a part of Tradition. That of S. *Auſtin* for communicating Infants has the true nature of a Teſtimony in it, and deſerv'd a more elaborate Anſwer, had its Sence been unqueſtionable and the Words cited from the Father himſelf; but the Sence of it being Diſputable (his Expoſitors explicating S. *Auſtin* by himſelf in another place not to mean *oral Manducation*, but *virtual* onely which is done by Baptiſm) and withall cited as a private Authours Sence concerning S. *Auſtin*, it falls under the 6th, and 8th. Head of faulty or inconcluſive Citations, and ſo is already anſwer'd.

9. This is the upſhot of that famous Sermon: And now I would gladly know what, in the Judgment of an intelligent perſon who examins things by Grounds, Dr. *Pierce* hath perform'd in this ſo highly extoll'd piece of his more than his dear Brother and fellow-champion againſt the Pope, Mr. HENRY WHISTLER? Onely he hath clad his little Nothings in ſome kind of mock-Rhetorick; which, like Fig-leaves, cover after a pitiful manner the Nakedneſs of his empty Diſcourſe.

courſe. Yet, were even his Rhetorick examin'd by the ſubſtantial Rules of that Art, I doubt it would come of as ill as his Proofs. For 'tis obvious to obſerve that the beginning of his Sermon is *a-la-mode* a School-boy's Theme, and that his Style is far from even or ſpun on one thread; Inſtead of the Thunder & Lightning of ſtrong and ſententious Sence aſtoniſhing and moving the Auditors reaſon by the advantageous ſmartneſs and Majeſty of the Expreſſion; he gives us a peal of Ordinance charg'd with ayr, a volly of thunder-thumping bombaſt, able to make a ſolid mans Reaſon nauſeate; and this moſt inartificially plac't at the very entrance of his Sermon, §. 2. Or elſe loud Pulpit-beating invectives and railings. He makes huge account of little quirking Obſervations out of Human Authours; which have no imaginable force or purpoſe but to make an oſtentation of the uncouthneſs of his reading; the Gallantry of his third paragraph. For ingenious ſurprizes of Reaſon, erecting and taking the Underſtanding, we have wordiſh Quibbles, Quirks, and Paranomaſias: and thoſe moſt evidently (contrary to Art) ſtudiouſly and induſtriouſly affected. His confident ſayings without Proof make up half his Sermon; and his Ironies and Sarcaſms are the ſauce to make all this windy meat go down.

10. I will cloſe with noting his excellent Faculty in quoting Scripture: To do which when the place is worth looking, as being brought to juſtify

ſtify ſome paſſage we are about, is grave and to ſome purpoſe; but, when no occaſion or need invites, upon the naming any two or three words which hap to be in Scripture, to be ſtill quoting and tricking the Margent with *Book*, *Chapter* and *Verſe* and relating *Stars* or *little Letters*, is a very empty piece of Pageantrie, and moſt ſillily Pedantical. Now, our Dr. cannot talk of *Faith*, but he muſt add (though moſt unſutably to his Reformers in *England*, to whom 'tis moſt notorious no body *deliver'd* it) *which was once deliver'd to the Saints*, and *Jude* 3. ſhall aſcertain it. He cannot name the words, *which was from the beginning*, but the margent ſhall direct you to *Mat.* 19. 8. The two words *Spending* and *being Spent* oblige him to let you know where to find them, 2 *Cor.* 12. 15. At the very naming *Help* and *All ſufficient*, (two good honeſt words, which might have been ſpoke whether Scripture had been or not) he cannot for his heart hold, but alledges you for it, 1 *Cor.* 1. 27. And will needs (though indeed very needleſly to us) prove himſelf a *weak Inſtrument* by a plain Text, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. The obvious and common words *condemn'd out of their mouths*, muſt have a Star of the Firſt magnitude to light you to a leſſer one in the margent, and that to *Luke* 19. 22. And *David's* cutting of *Goliah's* Head with his own Sword, a ſtory known undoubtedly by all that were like to read his Sermon, ſhall be ſecured from being

thought a piece of a Romance or Knight-erran-try by a punctual Citation in the open margent, 1 *Sam.* 17. 51. And, to omit diverſe of the like pleaſant ſtrain, leſt any Unbeliever ſhould be ſo impious as to doubt that his *THEOPNEVST AHOLIAB* was an *Embroiderer*, you ſhall ſee it as plain as the noſe on a man's face in an expreſs Text, *Exod.* 35. 30. 34.

11. But why inſiſt I thus on ſo poor a foolery in a Book I deſign'd for ſolid? or what advantage can I gain to my cauſe by ſo ſleight an Animadverſion? I anſwer, 'Tis my temper when I ſee an odd action done without reaſon, to trace it to its Original, and to ſearch after its proper Cauſe: And, upon conſideration, I finde none ſo proper for this Effect, as a certain kinde of humour of quoting in D. *Pierce* and others of his Brethren, ſo ſtrongly poſſeſſing them, and even naturaliz'd into them, that, ſo they be quoting, they matter not much whether it be to purpoſe or not: This I have ſhown in the whole bead-roll of his Citations (*the uſefulleſt part* (as he ſayes) *of his whole performance*) and that not one of thoſe which he call *Evidences*, is *concluſive*; that is, worth a ſtraw, or to purpoſe: But, becauſe every one will not be capable to ſee it in thoſe Citations he brings for Proofs, I let them ſee it in thoſe his late quotations of Scriptures: In which he ſo pittifully betraies his ſilly and vain humour of quoting to no imaginable end but to ſatisfy his cuſtomary habit or Fancy; and, as in his Citati-

Citations, ſo in theſe, *imagins* the Application of them to his Cauſe in ſtead of ſhowing it, that I conceive no Univerſitie-wit but will ſee in this carriage of his, that Dr. *Pierce*'s head is not too Scientifical, nor himſelf a fit man to to *demonſtrate* againſt the *Papiſts*.

SECOND APPENDIX.

Animadverſions,

On

Some Paſſages in Mr. Whitby.

1. I Beg pardon of my Reader for my late Merriment and Children's play with aiery bubbles and Feathers. Both D. *Pierce's* manner of writing and his Carriage towards Catholicks merited this kind of return. I hope the paſſages in Mr. *Whitby* I have deſign'd to anſwer, will give me occaſion to ſpeak more ſolidly: And, that they may do ſo, I will pick out thoſe which aim at ſome point of Concernment. I have a particular reſpect for the perſon, and am ſorry his growing hopefulneſs receiv'd a foil by his Book againſt Mr. *S. C.* and this through a threefold diſadvantage; the badneſs of his Cauſe, the Patronage of Dr. *Pierce*'s malice,

and his *impar congreſſus* with ſo learned an Antagoniſt.

2. My Deſigne leads me to take notice eſpecially of that paſſage, *p.* 93. *Sect.* 4. where he begins a diſcourſe about the Soveraignty of Reaſon, and explicates (rather than proves it ought to be ſo) what is his Rule and Guide to Faith. Which, becauſe it look't plauſibly, yet was prudently neglected by Mr. *SC.* who hearing of more Eminent Antagoniſts writing againſt him, judg'd it wiſeſt to reſerve himſelf to anſwer the Proteſtanrs ſecond and beſt Thoughts in Them, in caſe they were found to deſerve it; and, becauſe on the other ſide the *Challenge* was made to *all the Romaniſts in the World*, and many paſſages in it light croſs to the Grounds I had laid, I took leave to conſider and examin it my way. In a great part of it, eſpecially at the beginning the diſcourſe is rightly made; but in other places he confounds Guide with Rule, Power with Motive, and, by ſtraining a word in Mr. *S. C.* beyond its neceſſary ſignification, impoſes on us a falſe Tenet which he mainly builds upon. So that I am forc't to begin my anſwer by putting down our true one, which gives Faith and Reaſon both their due. This done, his Superſtructures on that Suppoſition will fall of themſelves.

3. Our Tenet then is that *Faith* is the ſame with *Belief*, that *Belief* relies on *Authority*, and Divine Faith or Belief on the Divine Authority

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as its *Motive*, and on the Churches as on the *Applier* of the other to my Understanding. At next, I hold that no Authority deserves Assent further than true Reason gives it to deserve; and, hence, the Divine Authority, being Essential Truth deserves in true Reason, if possible, Infinitely intense Assent or adhesion to its sayings from me; and the Churches Authority being found by my Reason to be *Certain*, it applies with Certainty (that is *closely*) the Divine Authority to my Understanding; and so obliges it absolutely to believe the Truths God has told, and to submit whatever reasons I may have against the Object reveal'd to this all-overpowering Authority of Essential Truth; This being the First Cause of all those things, whence my particular Reasons are taken. Nay, farther, hence it is that I adhere more heartily and firmly to a point of Faith than to any Conclusion of any Science whatever; because a more efficacious Cause equally closely apply'd is apt to produce a greater Effect, and no Cause is or can be in true reason comparable to that of the Divine Veracity in the point of causing Assent; which is closely apply'd by me to the Churches assurance. Hence my Faith is ever most Rational; because 'tis most rational to believe a point for which the Divine Veracity is engag'd, and highly rational to believe the Church assuring me that it is engag'd for such and such points: Nor yet is the Divine Authority or the Church (as Mr *Whitby* p. 96. very

mistakingly argues) *beholden to the judgment of my private reason for my belief of her Infallibility*, but on, the contrary, my private reason is beholden to them for that Judgment; seeing I therefore come to have that Judgment because Those, as Objects, wrought upon my Apprehension and imprinted a conceit of them there as they were in themselves, and so oblig'd my Reason to conclude and my Judgment to hold them such as they were. This Rational Assent establishes my Faith against the assaults of any doubts from Human Reasons; resting assur'd that the same God who told me this, is the Maker of all things else, and hath writ all Created Truths in the Things he hath made; whence no created Truth can thwart my Faith unless He can contradict himself, which is impossible. Hence, if I have true Science I am certain to find no part of it opposit to my Faith; but, on the contrary, conformable to It, as being a Child of the same Parent, *Essential Truth*: If I have not true Science, I ought not to think so; nothing therefore but mine own overweening can make me miscarry.

4. Reason having thus play'd her part in bringing me to Faith, deserts me not yet while I act in it, nor I her: my Acts of Belief are still *rational*, because it was rational to believe at first, and my Grounds why I then believ'd rest still unchang'd, nay are unchangeable. But yet, Reason acts much differently now then for-

formerly; Before I came at Faith she acted about her own Objects, Motives or Maxims, by which she scand the Authorities we spoke of: But, in Acts of Faith she hath nothing to do with the Objects of those Acts or Points of Faith; She is like a dimsighted man who us'd his Reason to find a trusty Friend to lead him in the twi-light, and then reli'd on his guidance rationally without using his own Reason at all about the Way it self. To make this clearer we may distinguish two sences in the word *Reason*; one, as 'tis taken for that natural Faculty which constitutes *Man*; which Faculty never deserts or ought to desert us in any action that is *Manly* or virtuous. The other as 'tis taken for that Power wrought upon by motives under its own ken; in the same sence we call it *human Reason*; by which is not meant the natural Power unactuated or abstractedly, for then the word *human* were a Tautology; but Reason as conversant with such objects or inform'd by such knowledges as are commonly found within the sphere of our natural condition as Men, such as are those which beget Science: And this leaves us when we have once found the Authority now spoken of; the Objects of Faith, formally speaking, being out of her reach; nor is she (thus understood) the motive of our Assent to the verity of the *Point of Faith*, but *AUTHORITY* onely. Wherefore into *Authority* onely, *Faith* (as such) is resolvd finally; though, if you go about to resolve the

Rationalneſs of aſſenting to the Authority it ſelf, it will light into thoſe Evident Reaſons, which your naturall power of reaſon, as yet uninform'd by Faith but by motives or maxims within its own ſphere, was capable to wield.

5. Reaſon therefore taken for my natural Power is my Eye or interiour *ſight*; as inform'd by common Principles or Maxims antecedent to Faith, my *Guid* to bring me to believe Authority; and thoſe motives or Maxims are the *Rules* to my Reaſon, by attending to which, ſhe hath virtue or ſkill to ſet her own thoughts *right*, that is to *guid* me in my way to Faith: but, when I have once come to beleeve Authority, that is, come to Faith, not Reaſon but *Authority* is my Guid; for I follow Authority and not my Reaſon in judging what is Faith, what not; and, though the Light of that naturall power never deſerts me, yet Reaſon, as rul'd by her own natural maxims, is uſeleſs to me as a *Guid*, or thoſe Maxims as a *Rule*; for I apply neither of theſe to the myſteries of Faith to ſcan their verity or falſity by, but purely rely upon *Authority*, and *beleeve* them. Authority then is my Guid; and in the *Infallibility* of that Authority, conſiſts the power or virtue it has to guide me *right*, that is to regulate or *rule* me, as one of the Faithfull, or as one who muſt have ſuch Certain Grounds of my Aſſent, as I may ſecurely build my Salvation on. This Authority then, as it is *Infallible*, is alſo my *Rule* in my *beleeving*, or the *Rule* of my *Faith*. This of my

Rule

Rule of Faith in Common, against Adversaries of Faith in common. But, with Protestants, who grant Christ to be God, and consequently his words or doctrine true, the onely Rule and Guid we need, is to lead us into the Knowledge of what he said and assure it to us. We affirm then, that the *Catholick Church* is the *Guid* we follow, and her *Infallibility* (consisting in Tradition) our *Rule of Faith*. Hence all Catholicks profess her doctrin uninterruptedly succeeding from the Apostles time, and so to continue to the end of the World; hence with one voice they lay claim to Christs gracious Assistance to her, in defending her from over-growing Errors against Faith, or Heresies; hence all profess to hear and follow her, and pledge undoubtingly even the security of their salvation, by relying on the Certainty of her Living Voice for their Tenets, and on her Disciplin for the Practice of their Faith. And though some Schoolmen make Scripture a partial Rule of Faith, yet they can mean onely materially not formally, that is, that some part of Faith is signifi'd by Scripture's Letter, not that Scripture's Letter alone is sufficient securely to signify it to private understandings so as to beget that most strong & firm Assent found in Divine Faith; as is evident by this, that all hold no Scripture is of private Interpretation; all hold the living voice of the Church and her constant Practice are the best Interpreters of Scripture. Now, Faith being *Tenets* and *Sence*, that must be formally

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the Rule of Faith, which aſcertains us of Chriſts Sence; not the materiall Characters which that Certain Interpreter we call the Church works upon, and by her Practicall Tradition interprets.

6. 'Tis high time now to look back upon Dr. *Pierce* and his party, how juſtly they deal with us, and how miſtakingly they diſcourſe when they come to the Grounds of their Faith.

7. Firſt, by the tenour of his diſcourſe he would ſeem to obtrude upon us a Tenet, which none but perfect mad-men could hold; namely, that we profeſs we have no reaſon why we believe the Church; which devolves to this that we muſt profeſs we have as much reaſon to believe an old wife's dream as our Faith, ſince there can be no leſs reaſon than none at all. And hence he will needs aſſure the Reader, that therefore, the *Enthuſiaſtick Sectaries are in part Romiſh Proſelytes*, &c. And indeed upon ſo groſs a calumny layd down for his principle and a ſober Truth; what might he not conclude? with equal reaſon he might have inferr'd that all *Bedlam* were Catholicks, and that to turn *mad* were to turn a *Romaniſt*. But his carriage to put this upon Mr. *S.C.* is *ſtrangely* unjuſt; ſince he knows and hints it, that he writ a Book upon his declaring himſelf Catholick, entitled, *Motives of his Converſion*; does he think the word *Motives* does not ſignify *Reaſons*, or, that to write an whole Book of Reaſons why he adher'd to

to the Catholick Church ſignifies that he renounc't all reaſon why he believ'd her?

8. Next, as for his own tenet, he layes this for his Ground, that, *Reaſon alone is Judge in all caſes.* I will propoſe him one caſe, and 'tis the Exiſtence of a *Trinity.* To work now with your Reaſon about this object, and ſee how you evince it. I doubt your beſt reaſons will crack ere you make all ends meet. But, you mean you muſt have Reaſon to *believe* it; I conceive (ſpeaking properly) you ſhould rather ſay you muſt have Reaſon to believe the *Authority*, and *Authority* to believe It; for *Belief* is as properly relative to *Authority* as *Science* is to an Act of true Reaſon or *Evidence.* Whence 'tis as incongruous to ſay I muſt have Reaſon to believe ſuch a Point, as to ſay I know ſuch a point Scientifically by Authority. Again, for God's love who ever deny'd they ought to have reaſon to believe the Churches Authority; Is any thing more frequent in our Controvertiſts and Divines treating of the Ground of Faith than large Diſcourſes concerning Motives of Credibility?

9. Thirdly, he ſaies that diſputing with Romaniſts whether Scripture be the ſole Rule, he means tis ſo *limitedly*, that is between *Chriſtians, who have already acknowledged Scripture a Rule of Faith.* By which I ſee Mr *Whitby* guides himſelf by *ſounds*, though he muſt needs know (if he knows any thing of Catholick Tenets) our

Sence

ſence is quite different. I beſeech you, Sir, deal fairly with us: Is not that, ſpeaking formally and properly, *the Rule of Faith* which gives us Chriſts *ſence*; and does not that give us the Sence of Scripture which regulates us in the Interpretation of it? Did ever Catholick then hold that Scripture interpreted on any faſhion, much leſs on your faſhion by private Judgments or reaſons regulated by Grammatical ſkill, Criticiſms and ſuch like verbal knowledges, is a Rule of Faith; nay do not we conſtantly abhor this way as the Source of Hereſy? Take us right then we hold not Scripture's Letter alone a Rule, but Scripture interpreted by the *Church*; that is, indeed, the Church formally ſpeaking; and ſo you ſee you miſtake our Principle. Yet upon our joint-agreement in this your Diſcourſe againſt us proceeds. Retrive it then, you ſee your Errour. Again, you tell us Scripture is your *new Rule*, but forget quite in your diſcourſe to tell us that your Reaſon aſſures you Scripture is to be the onely Rule, or why it ſhould be ſo; ſince (beſides what I have demonſtrated to the Contrary in my former Diſcourſes) 'tis evident Chriſtian Religion had deſcended many ſteps ere the Scripture's parts were much ſcatter'd, much leſs the Whole collected; and no leſs clear that, that can never be a Rule or Way to Faith, which many follow yet their thoughts ſtraggle into many ſeveral Judgments; not in indifferent points, but in that of the *Trinity*

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amongst the rest, as your self profess of the *Socinian*, that *he rejects not the Trinity in the first place, because it seems a contradiction, but because 'tis not clearly discover'd in Scripture*; by which you see he adheres firm to your Rule, and so ought to be acknowledg'd one of your Church; since, though he hap to differ in some points, yet he holds fast the Rule common to both; which is the substantialest Principle of a Church as such, being the Ground of all Faith. And, indeed, your Kindness to him here, and your tender care not to displease him, shows you have a true brotherly affection for him. Though I fear he he will con you small thanks for making his Principle run thus, *That which is not clearly reveal d in Scripture and is coniradictory ti reason is not to be believ'd*; which seems to imply, that were it clear in Scripture, yet contradictory to Reason, then he would notwithstanding belive it. An over-strain of Piety no *Socinian* was ever guilty of, and I can assure you no learned Catholick Divine I ever heard of ever made such an Act of Faith. But 'tis another case if it onely *seems contradictory*, and is not judg'd by him to be evidently such; for then there is room left in his mind for the contrary Assent of Faith to settle there.

10. You say *you prescribe not the doctrin imputed to the Socinians, because it makes Reason the Judge of Faith, but the Rule of Faith.* Pray take pains to consider what you say. He that

judges

judges must have some Principles in his head by which he is *regulated* in making such a Judgment; those Principles then must be his *Rule* in that Action; and, if that Judgment be an adhesion to a point of Faith, those Principles are his RULE OF FAITH. Examin now well your own thoughts, whether your Principles, by which you find out certainly by interpreting Scripture this is God's sence or a point of Faith, be not Maxims of your human Reason. I am sure in disputes against us you prove and defend your Faith by such skills; as Languages, History and other Knowledges got by Human Learning; and consequently hold It your selves upon the tenour of those skills, which therefore are your Rule of Faith, and not upon the bare Letter. You, I know, will deny it. But I beg your second thoughts to reflect that a *Rule* to such an Effect is the immediate Knowledge to the Power as conversant about that Effect; and that, if another intervene, it regulates the former; which thereupon becomes the thing *ruled*, not the *Rule*. Do then these skills clear the Letter of Scripture, that is, make known Gods Sence to you? If so, since their Immediate effect is to *clear it*, 'tis impossible to deny but they are at least part of the Revelation; for *revealing* is *clearing*, and God's Sence was not *clearly revealed* but by those means, that is by *human maximes*; and so they are at least the more formal part of your Rule of Faith. Again, I ask

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might you not have mistaken the true Sence without those Human Maxims? If so, then They, and not Scripture's Letter, were your Rule. If not, then onely common Sence is requisit to understand clearly what's *reveal'd* in Scripture; and then, either your Brother Socinian or you want Common Sence, which I think you'l scarce say.

11. But, will you see you still hold *Reason* your Rule, notwithstanding you cry up the Written word? Find you not there expresly that God has hands, feet, nostrils and passions like ours, and this in clear terms? Why is it not then a point of Faith? You will not answer sure it is against Maxims of Reason; you renounc't them formerly (*p.* 94.) when you had found out your *new Rule* and onely allow'd your Reason power to judge, if a point were sufficientlie reveal'd, that *it is most rational to captivate it self, though it seem to contradict or thwart Reason.* Now this is *sufficiently reveal'd* being plainly writ in your Rule of Faith, and the direct Letter of Scripture; why will you not then *captivate your Reason* and believe it? I see you do but complement with God's *incomprehensible Knowledge* in speaking so highly of it and so humbly of your own *shallow Intellect*: Will you deny a point of Faith so plainly reveald for your own *capricho* or conceit? Perhaps you'l say 'tis not clearly *reveal'd* because the contrary is plain in Scripture too. I ask, is it *as plain*? if not, it cannot over-

overthrow the title of This, to be a point of Faith: If *as plain*, why ſhould you not believe both? Be valiant, Sir, and believe a contradiction it being *clearly reveal'd*. Perhaps it *ſeems* but ſuch, and then your own profeſſion. p. 94. obliges you to admit it: You that can acknowledge an *Infinit extenſion of ſpace* (when *you ſay all the world beſides* does ſo too, ſure you thought all the World was in your Fancy) may alſo hold *Materia ab æterno*, and that it is onely a part of Gods Nature, as (if I miſtake not) *Jacob Bemen* does; and then *ſecundum hanc partum* of *illam* will do the work, and gives a true ſence to both ſides of the contradiction. You ſhould do any thing which could by any means make it ſeem poſſible, rather than queſtion a *plain Divine Revelation*: Nay, perhaps you do not think you can demonſtrate the contrary to the ſolution I have helpt you out with, at leaſt that your Demonſtration is but a *ſeeming* one; and then I challenge your candour to own your ſayings, and demand why you are not bound to uſe this ſhift and a thouſand others rather than violate your avow'd Rule of Faith, and deny and hold againſt the clear Letter of Scripture. If you alledge you have perfect Science of the contrary by Metaphyſicks; then, though I expect not this from you, your Science rules your Rule of Faith; gloſſing or rather violently wreſting the plain Letter, and ſo is ſo abſolutely your Rule of Faith that it controls and even baffles

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the other though *clearly revealing*: Or, if to be in expres terms in Scripture be not to be *clearly revealed*, I would fain know what those words *clearly revealed in Scripture* signifie.

10. Perhaps you'l say, that notwithstanding your *new Rule*, Reason must be your *GUID* still even in Faith, though not your *Rule*. But I ask, if your Reason must guide you sometimes so as to deny the clear Letter of Scripture, since a Guid in any thing must be regulated by some Knowledges in that Affair, by what Principles or Knowledges Reason is to regulate it self while it guides you in that particular now in question? By Principles of Faith? How can that be in your Grounds antecedently to the known Sence of the Scripture? By Principles of *Humane Science*? Then those Principles of Human Science give you the certain Sence of the Written Word when it self is insufficient, and therefore are still truly your Rule of Faith; and so you are forc't to fly back for refuge to the old Rule, *Humane Reason*, which you seemingly renounc't when you had found your *new Rule* of the Scripture. 'Tis Evident then that some Maxims of your Reason are your Rule and not Scripture's Letter. And this is what we reprehend in the Socinian and you too; that, chusing a wrong Rule of Faith so to avoid the Church, you both glose it as seems best to your Reason regulating her self by her own, and those fallible, Maxims. They by certain acute and ingenious Sophistries proper

to themſelves, you by the more ſchool-boy way of Grammar and Dictionary Learning; and ſo both of you make your *Rule* the *thing Ruled*. Nor think to retort any part of this Diſcourſe upon our Rule of Faith; For, this being the living voice of the Church, delivers us a Determinate Sence of the Points we are to profeſs, whereas Yours needs skils and helps of ſtudious Reaſon to tell you what it would ſay; Ours is alive, and in the Breaſt and Actions of the Faithful; yours is dead characters, waxen-natur'd, and pliable to the Dedalean fancies of the ingenious molders of new Opinions; and ſo, alone, can ſatisfie no man as you handle it.

13. No wonder now, if, having no certainer a Ground or Rule of Faith for her ſelf, your Church is ſhamefaſt of obliging others to believe her: Man's nature could ſcarce own or permit ſo irrational a tyrannie. Yet whether ſhe does or does not, we muſt not know from your words; which run ſo backwards and forwards, that none can tell which is the true face of the *Janus*. Firſt p. 99. you ſeem to deny it ſtoutly from the carriage of your Convocations and Biſhops, and from your own Tenets: Yet afterwards you ſeem to grant they do *require a poſitive aſſent* ſometimes, and juſtifie them as not doing it *upon pretence of any Infallibility, but becauſe the thing determin'd is ſo Evident in Scripture, that all denying it muſt be wilful.* A rare Diſcourſe, and worthy a deep conſideration! Pray who muſt be Judge it is ſo

Evident

Evident in Scripture as to render the Dissenters guilty of flat Wilfulness? The Bishops, or your Church? Nothing less: In the beginning of this Discourse (p. 93.) you plainly deny'd them to be Judges of Faith. Now in your sence to be *clearly reveal'd* or evident in Scripture, and to be *of Faith* is all one; so that they must not be Judges of *what is evident in Scripture*, lest by necessary consequence they become Judges of *Faith*; and yet without having power to judge what is evident in Scripture, they must have power to *require assent to Points as evident in Scripture*; nay and *punish* the dissenters too: For 'tis a madness for Governours to *require* any thing of their Subjects, without having Rewards and Punishments in their hands to make what they require to be duely observ'd. Nay p. 93. you absolutely refus'd to admit them as *Guides of your Faith*. A moderate word and less than to be a *Judge*! Which signifies they may have *power to require our Assents* in matters in which they have *no power to guide us*; that is, they may have power to *require us to go wrong* for any thing we or they know. An excellent honour for the Church of *England*, that her Champions profess in Print her Supreme Pastors have no power at all to guide their Flock in their Faith, or to it when they are out of it! Again, I would ask whether the *Trinity* be not *Evident in Scripture*, and the Socinians *wilful* for denying it? Why are they then so kindly dealt with? Or what could be reply'd to a *Socinian*,

answering, when his Assent to the Trinity were required, that he humbly submitted to Scripture, that he us'd all the means he could, but discover'd it not so evident there; and thereupon complain'd that you obtruded upon his equally-learned party your own conceit or opinion for Scripture-Evidences? What therefore your alledge here, as in your Churches behalf, that she *requires not a positive assent upon pretence of any Infallibility*, more condemns Her; seeing 'tis most absurd and irrational that one should require any man to assent to any point or proposition whatever, as evident in Scripture, without Infallible Certainty (at least imagin'd and pretended) that it is thus evident there; for, should it happen to be otherwise, how ridiculous were his Authority, how damnable and diabolical his Tyrannie to oblige men to the hazard of falshoods in matters of Faith, that is in matters belonging to his eternal Salvation; and in the mean time profess himself Ignorant whether they be false or no.

14. Now our Church goes another way; which ere I declare, I would let your party see, that Interiour Assent may be required by Governours lawfully and rationally; which your Principles can never make sence of. Suppose a thousand witnesses from several places each of them held alwayes men of good consciences should swear in open Court that they had seen such and such actions done by such a man, or that they had seen, spoken or convers't with such a person, were not

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he *mad* that is a renouncer of Reason or Man's Nature who should not believe them. You see then these Witnesses have power to propose such an Object as can *oblige to Belief*? You see the Dissenters are Irrational, that their act of dissenting springs from some Passion or Vice, and Vice is punishable; and so is the Effects of that Dissent, if it be in such a matter as is highly pernicious to Mankind's best concerns. Now our Church makes account she is able to propose an Authority incomparably more ample than the Attestation now spoken of, for the true Descent of her Faith; and judges such a proposal, founded on the eye-sight of all those Witnesses, to be able to oblige to interiour Assent in such a degree as to render them most highly wilful vicious and irrational who should disbelieve it; hence (the crime intrenching upon the order to mankind's Salvation, the highest concern imaginable,) both to edify those dissenters by correcting their vice, and the circumstant Faithful, by breeding a conceit in them, through the punishment of the others, of the sacredness of Faith and its Rule, and the hainousness of Pride of understanding the ready way to all Heresies, they may nay ought punish their Interiour Dissent: Not out of an height of Authority without motives, as Mr. *Whitby* conceits, but because that Authority is her self such a motive to Belief, that onely irrational vicious and wilfully-blind persons can recede from it by disbelief:

And hence our Churches procedure is rational, natural, ſweet and charitable, tending to amend an enormity of Will not bred from a rationally but paſſionate diſſatisfy'd Underſtanding. Nay, Mr. *Whitby*'s diſcourſe juſtifies Our Churches procedure; who ſeems to allow his Church a power to require a poſitive Aſſent, when the caſe comes to be ſuch that the denier of it muſt needs be held *wilfull*; and our Church neither ſayes nor acts otherwiſe.

15. By this Diſcourſe I would not have Mr *Whitby* imagin that I am about proving our Churches Infallibility in this place; but onely ſhowing that, holding She can evidence her Authority, She goes rationally to work and conſonantly to her ſelf in requiring Aſſent to her Propoſals; whereas Theirs, confeſſing her ſelf fallible even in interpreting Scripture, upon which all, both her *Faith*, and *Authority* as a Church, depends, were ſelf-condemn'd, irrational and tyrannical if She ſhould go about to require any ſuch Interiour Aſſent. Now, though he in big words denies this to be her carriage, aſking *when did they* (meaning Biſhops, Convocations or Parliaments) *challenge any power over our minds and Conſciences*, and alledges the conſent of their Divines for it, yet I wonder what he thinks of the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, made by a Proteſtant Parliament; is there no obligation there to *hold* any thing? Yes, as ſtrong as Oath can tye it. And, which is worſe, 'tis more Irrational

nal to go about to bind Our Assents who are not of their Church, than to bind their own Subjects. This in practice is perform'd towards all; but so imprincipled a procedure that their Church waves it when it comes to a rational scanning in a Dispute and Controversy, acknowledging so their want of Grounds to make it good. Which shows that the Authority of their Church sprang from the Parliament or Secular State, in regard She professes her self very heartily content with external Obedience, let the Interiour Assent goes where it will; most unlike the Church settled by the Wisdome of the Eternal Father, and constituted *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*; who provided in the first place for the Churches Power to *hold* us to the same *Tenets* (which are the Principles of our Actions) knowing that, unless the Root of Faith be found, the Actions, its branches, must needs be rotten and unconscientious; and, that no Congregation could long hold together, nor indeed longer than the plain force of the Secular Sword aw'd them, unless by power to evidence its Authority it had power to oblige men's Understandings connaturally to an Unity in the same Faith; which done, all else would follow. And hence we may see confessedly in the Protestant Principles the reason of their present and past distractions, and divine of the future; for, men's Fancies being naturally various, and no power in her to keep them in an Union, they

must needs ramble into multitudes of dissenting Sects; which to strive to unite into one were to force both Nature and Conscience too. *Nature*, in striving to unite their Understandings in Faith, without offering them *Evidence of Authority*; *Conscience*, in binding them to *Act* as Protestants do, whereas they are ready to stake their Salvation upon it that their best reasons working upon the very Rule of Faith Protestants recommend, obliges them to the contrary, and that to force them to *act with Them* is to force them to *sin*; So that the Protestants at once profess they will not or cannot oblige their *Understandings*, and yet at the same time contend by force to oblige their *Wills*, without, nay against their Understandings.

16. In a word, let Protestants write, talk & quote words as long as they will, Plainest Common Sence tells them and every man who considers it, that unless they settle some undisputable Method of arriving at Christ's Sence or Faith, that is, some *self-evident* (and so *all-obliging*) *Rule of Faith*, the Protestant Church can never hope for Power to reduce their Dissenters, nor to hold together or govern efficaciously their own Subjects; that is, they can never hope for Unity within themselves; nor, lastly, Union with them that have it, and charitably endeavour they may have it too.

THIRD

THIRD APPENDIX.

Animadversions

On

Some Passages in Mr. Stillingfleet.

1. THE loud Fame of Mr. *Stillingfleet's* Book preventing its Publication, and withall the report of his good parts coming from diverse Judicious Persons, bred in me a great Impatience to see something of his other Writings, that so I might have more solid Ground to build my Expectation on than common rumour or commendation of acquaintances. A Protestant Friend shew'd me a little Treatise of his concerning Excommunication. I perus'd the beginning of it, and immediately told him Mr. *Stillingfleet* was a very ingenious person, and writ the best I ever yet saw any Protestant: For he settled first his notion or the true nature of the Thing, and thence attempted by intrinsecal *mediums* to draw immediate Consequences, which show'd that his head lay right for Science. But, withal, I assur'd my Friend 'twas impossible he could write against us, and take that method; the nature of his Cause not enduring so severe a Test. His Book coming forth, and bearing in its Title *a Rational Account of the Grounds of Protestant*

Protestant Religion, my Expectation was more erected; and, till my self could get leasure to peruse it, I told diverse both Catholicks and Protestants that they might expect from Mr. *Stillingfleet*'s Wit the most that could be said either for the later or against the former. But, coming to over-look cursorily his *Infallibility of Tradition*, Part 1. Cap. 6. and *The Protestants Way of resolving Faith*, Cap. 7. I had quite lost Mr. *Stillingfleet*; and, instead of him, had found a Dr. *Hammond*, Dr. *Pierce*, or a *Dissuader*; who talk not out of Nature or Things, but Words & Imagination. I plainly discover'd there was not one proposition in those two Discourses which could be a solid Ground for a rational understanding (that would be true to it self) to settle and rely on; and was desirous to show it, had it not been uncivil to put my sickle into another man's harvest, and crop the victory due to another's Learning and Industry: Victory, I say; For he that defends his Cause no better, in effect yields it lost. Yet I beg leave of the judicious Authour of *Labyrinthus Cantuariensis* to maintain one Breach where I find my self more directly assaulted; Oral Tradition being the Post I have taken upon me to explicate further & defend, because I conceive it the solid Ground on which the Church, or all Catholicks both Learned and Unlearned, rely as *Faithful*: however some School-men, *abounding in their own Sence*, ground also their Explication of the

the Churches Infallibility on somthing besides.

2. Mr *Stillingfleet* then Part 3. Chap. 5. § 4, & 5. sets himself to oppose *Oral Tradition*, whose Infallibility he opposes to *Doctrinal Infallibility in Pope or Councils*. Where, if by *Doctrinal Infallibility*, he means that which they have as Doctors or Schollers, he may reflect that no Catholick makes such an Infallibility *proper* to the Church or Church-Governours, as such; however it may be somtimes *necessary* to proceed upon it in some signal occasions. Now, take away this Infallibility, there is none left but the Infallibility of *Tradition*, perform'd by Testifying: It being Evident that we have but two wayes of ordinary Knowledge; by Acts of our Soul, or Operations on our Body; that is, by *Reason* and *Experience*; the former of which belongs to Speculaters or Doctors; the second to *Deliverers* of what was receiv'd, or, to Testifiers. Whence M. *Stillingfleet* may see he stumbles at the very threshold by counterposing *Doctrinal Infallibility* to *Traditionary*; since that which we call *Ecclesia docens* professes constantly to ground her self on Tradition; witness the Council of *Trent* in every Session where she defines Faith.

3. No wonder then, if grounding on this mistake, Mr *Stillingfleet* declares himself unsatisfi'd. He asks therefore *whether he is bound to believe what the present Church delivers to be Infallible?* I understand him not: Had he instead of the word *Infallible*, put *receiv'd as deliver'd ever*, or *Infal-*

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libly true, I had ; for Fallibility and Infallibility belong to the Knowing Power or the Persons that have it, not to the Objects; The Object being neither *deceiv'd* nor *not deceiv'd*, but *we*. Well, but suppose he means by it *deliver'd ever*, or (which is equivalent) *certainly true*, for what came from Christ must be so ; In that case we answer Affirmatively: He asks again, *on what account* is he *bound to believe it*? And he makes our Answer to be, *Because the present Church cannot be deceiv'd in what the Church of the former Age believ'd, nor That in the precedent, and so up till Christ.* This is indeed part of our Answer: The other part is, that *the Church in no Age could conspire against her Knowledge to deceive that Age immediately following in matter of Fact evident in a manner to the whole World.* Upon this, he falls into two new Demands which take up this whole paragraph.

4. The first is, *how we can assure him the present Church obliges him to believe nothing but onely what and so far as it receiv'd from the former Church*? I answer, by her manifest Practice ; never refusing Communion to any man that could approve himself to believe all the former Age did. I could here distinguish the word *Believe*, but I refer it till I come to speak of *de fide*. He proceeds. *What Evidence can you bring to convince me both that the Church alwayes observ'd this Rule, and could never be deceiv'd in it?* For the later, I hope I need bring no greater Evidence than this,

that

that men in all Ages had Eyes, Ears, and other Senſes, alſo common Reaſon, and as much memory as to remember their own names and frequently-inculcated Actions. If you diſprove this, I doubt we have loſt *mankind*, the ſubject we are ſpeaking of. And, till you diſprove it, neither I nor any man in his wits can doubt that this Rule depending on Teſtifying, that is *Sence* or Experience, can poſſibly permit men to be *deceivable*. The former part I ſhall ſpeak to when I come to ſhow the Obligation not to vary from Faith. His Scruple ſprings hence, that he *ſees the Roman Church aſſerts things to be* de fide *in one age which were not in another*, &c. that *this is the common Doctrin* and the *deniers* ill-look't on. I beg leave to diſtinguiſh the words *de fide*; which may either mean *Chriſtian Faith* or Points of Faith *taught by Chriſt*; and then you ſee 'tis nonſence to ſay they can be in one Age and not in another; for what Chriſt has taught he has taught, and the preteritneſs of the Thing has ſo fixt its Exiſtence to its proper time, that 'tis not now obnoxious to variation; *Quod factum eſt infectum fieri non poteſt.* Or, *de fide* may mean *obligatory to be believ'd.* In this latter ſence none (I think) denies things may be *de fide* in one Age, and not in another; in the former ſence none holds it. What's now become of your difficulty? I believe you are in ſome wonderment, and think I elude it rather then anſwer it: I ſhall endeavour to unperplex you.

5. Chri-

5. Christianity ayms not to make us *Beasts*, but more perfectly *Men*; and the perfection of our Manhood consists in using our Reasons. Since then natural Consequences are apt to spring from natural Principles by the operation of Reason, and we cannot but think that the Consequences apt to flow from Supernatural Principles or Points of Faith deliver'd down from Christ (onely which are *de fide* in the former Sence) are of incomparably greater Excellency than Natural Truths, it follows that Christianity or Christian Faith is so far from hindring the Faithful from deducing out of them, that both out of their nature as Supream Truths or Principles, and out of their high Excellency they invite and prompt most strongly to it. Now these Points deduc't out of Principles of Faith are of two sorts; The former those which need no more but Common Sence or the ordinary natural Light of Reason to discover their arising thence, nor any piece of Skill or Science to infer them, but are seen by the bare Principle of Faith, or rather *in* it; being indeed but a Branch or Part of that Principle. The later are those which need, besides, the Maxims of some Science got by Speculation to infer them. An Example of the former sort is that against the *Monothelites* of Christ's having an *Human Will*; for, common Experience tells the most vulgar that every Man has a Principle in him impelling him to Act, which we agree to call a *Will*. Such like-

wise

wise are all Propositions of this Nature which the Church uses upon occasion of some emergent Heresie to explain her self and put the point of Faith out of danger of being *equivocated*. Examples of the later sort are Theological Conclusions; in which a Natural Truth is one of the Premises, joyning with the Supernatural one to infer them. To omit this, as little to our purpose at present; Of the former sort the Church is necessitated to make use upon occasion; that is, when any Heretick questions Those, and *eâdem operâ* the whole point of Faith it self of which they were a part. Upon occasion I say; For what concern'd its the Faithful or who ever heard much noise of this Proposition, *Christ has two Wills*, thus singled out and expresst apart, till the *Monothelite* granting him but one, forc't the Church, that she might preserve the main Tenet of Christ's having two Natures, or being God and Man, to maintain, publish and define that other.

6. To apply this then; since none can have Obligation to *believe* what they have not obligation to *think of*, and, that in some Age the *Generality* of the Faithful have no Occasion nor consequently Obligation to minde, reflect or *think on* those Propositions involvd in the main stock of Faith, and truly parts of it, that is indeed *It*; It follows that a Thing may be *de fide* or obligatory to be believ'd in one Age and not in another. Perhaps Mr. *Stillingfleet* may

ask

ask how the Church can have Power to oblige the Generality to Belief of such a point. I answer, she obliges them to believe the main Point of Faith by virtue of Tradition's being a Self-evident Rule, and these Imply'd Points by virtue of their being self-evidently-connected with those main and perpetually-us'd Points, so that the vulgar can be rationally and connaturally made capable of this their Obligation. Whence the Government of our Church is still justify'd to be sweet and according to right Nature, and yet forcible and Efficacious to hold her Subjects in a strict Union. Not to mention how these Points also descended by a kind of Tradition; for I doubt not but the Apostles had occasion in explaining Faith to speak of These; however the no Necessity brought them not so much into play, but left them unreflected on by the Generality.

7. But to return to Mr. *Stillingfleet*, who acts here like a Politician and would *conquer* us by first *dividing* us, and making odious Comparisons between two parties of Divines. But he may please to reflect how we all hold firmly the same divinely-constituted Church-Government, and the same self-evident Rule of Faith to give our understandings the same principles as Christians, and so our wills the same Actions: And those are firmly rooted in all our Hearts to have been recommended to us by the wisdom of the Eternal Father: Whence 'tis Impossible for all

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the Wit of Man or even Malice of Hell to disunite us as we are *Faithful*: As private Discoursers, our different Natures and Circumstances must needs distinguish us. Every one *believes* the same; but, coming to *explicate* this Belief, they vary according to the several degrees of perfection in their understanding Powers. And yet M. *Stillingfleet* is not aware how little we differ even as Divines: For, though some Speculaters attribute to the Church a power of *defining* things *not held before*, yet few will say she has *New Revelations*, or *New Articles* of Faith, & those only some Lawyers who talk *ultra crepidam*, no Divines that I know of; and none, that Christ was not a perfect Law-giver; which are necessary Consequents (or rather in a manner Identical) to the other. And, when it comes ro the point, those men explain themselves that all was *deliver'd Faith*, either *Explicitly* or *Implicitly*; which I have shown to bear a very good Sence, in my Explication of *de fide*. He tells us Popes and Councils challenge a power to make things *de fide* in one Age which was not in another: he speaks onely in common and proves it not: Had he brought Instances, it might have been better clear'd. In the mean time I have shown him how, take them right, this is both perfectly innocent and unavoidably necessary to a Church. What would avail him is, if a Pope and Council should define a *new Thing*, and declare they ground themselves on *new Lights*, as did their first Reformers in *England*. But he will

finde no ſuch fopperies in Faith-definitions made by the Catholick Church. He tells us that this is *the common Doctrin maintain'd*; By which I perceive he is at an end of his Argument againſt our *Church*; there being no evidenter ſigne of it, than to leave off aſſaulting Her; confound her with the *Schools*, or ſome private Opinaters, and then carp at theſe mens Tenets. Whereas M. *Stillingfleet* wants not Wit to know, that no ſober Catholick holds *Human deductions* the *Rule of our Faith*, Schoolmen *Definers* of it, nor the *Schools* the *Tribunal* whence to propoſe it authoritatively and obligingly to the Generality of the Faithful; much leſs a few Divines, which are far from reaching the Authority of the Schools. Yet how much of his Book would need no Anſwer, were this Impertinent Topick laid aſide? But well; Let Schools and Church be all one, that is, let every maſter of divinity be a Biſhop, what means he to conclude from the words *common Doctrin?* Does he make account every School-Doctrin muſt be *equally* in vogue, or that an Opinion's being *Common* defines it Faith and condemns the other for Heretical. Where's his Reaſon? The direct contrary follows from its being *Common*; and, that 'tis not Faith which others, though not ſo many, may contradict; and he is but meanly vers't in our Schools if he ſees not very many publikely maintain that there are no new Revelations without dreading *Excommunication*, or being held *Heretical* and *ſeditious*: So they

they grant the Church power (as they ought) by new Propoſitions and new but expreſſive Words, (yet, both the ſame in *ſence* and ſo not new in *ſubſtance*) to meet with the new blundering Cavils of Innovators.

8. Yet all this while M. *Stillingfleet* cannot ſee how to *ſatisfie himſelf of the Sence of our Church as to this particular*. Nor ever will, while he wilfully looks the wrong way, that is, towards ſome particular Schoolmen or Divines, not towards the Univerſality of the Faithful or Church. What need he counterfeit this puzzle? Did he never hear of ſuch a thing as the Council of *Trent*? Or is it ſo hard to finde it? Again, does not he know all the Catholick Church allow more a thouſand times to It than to all the Schoolmen in the World? Yes very well; How comes it then that he runs to ſome Schoolmen, and neglects the Church ſpeaking in her Repreſentative? Becauſe he may finde there a clear Solution of his doubt, by the conſtant procedure of that moſt grave Synod in its definitions: where he will hear of no ſuch Toyes as *New Revelations*, but directly the contrary; Every Seſſion where Faith was defin'd profeſſing to build on *Tradition*, *Teaching* and *Preaching*, that is, *Oral Tradition*; *ever, alwayes, from the beginning*, &c. that is not-*new*, but the *old*-and-*ever*-Faith. If you would combat our Church, here you have her; fall to work: But you find ſome Schoolmen opining alſo Infallibility in ſome other means beſides Tradition, and

judging this Tenet eaſilier confuted, you level your blowes at it, becauſe the other is out of your reach; and would make this Tenet the Sence of the Catholick Church, and ſo ſeem to oppoſe the Church her ſelf. You would diſgrace this Way of Tradition as maintain'd but by a few, and thoſe blemiſht perſons. How far are you wide of the Truth? 'Tis the way every Catholick in the whole Church, none excepted, holds and follows. For my part, I diſavow the maintaining any Point or affecting any way which is not aſſented to by all; and this, not as Opinion, but deeply rooted in their hearts as Infallibly Certain. Schoolmen at Liberty queſtion Perſonal Infallibility of the Pope, ſome grant it not to him and his *Roman* Clergy, ſome queſtion that of a Provincial Synod; nay ſome, whoſe Books are extant and yet uncenſur'd, maintain even a General Council may poſſibly err; but not one I have heard or read of affirms that *Tradition*, or the Living voice of the Church Eſſential, could err; For in doing ſo, he call'd all his Faith in queſtion, and ſo ceaſt to be a Chriſtian.

9. This then being held by *all*; held *firmly*; and that it is *abſolutely Infallible* ſo that in no caſe it can err, the others only by *ſome*, & *faintly* in compariſon (as appears by the Faithful's permitting them to be queſtion'd) nay, not held at all Infallible but upon Suppoſal of certain Conditions to be obſerv'd, in which alſo Divines differ, Mr *Stillingfleet* and other Proteſtant Writers may ſee what

what they have to do if they will candidly impugn the Catholick Church, and not trifle away time in wrangling with ſome private Opinators. I have ſet them a fair mark in my Diſcourſes, if they will ſpeak to the Point; and the end of my Preface has told them how to do it. If they overthrow this, all the other Infallibilities now ſpoken of will fall with It; If not, not onely This of Univerſal Tradition will ſtand, but alſo all the other Infallibilities will in Virtue of it be eſtabliſht on a firmer baſis, than any who begins not with and ſettles the Firſt Principle in *Controverſy* could ever give them. This Foundation then they muſt either ſubvert, or they may fear the Papiſts will build ſuch ſuperſtructures on it as will reach to Heaven. It riſes apace, and has advanc't many Stories in a ſmall time.

10. By this Diſcourſe all Mr. *Stillingfleet's If's* which follow, have their Anſwer; and he will ſee the knot eaſily looſ'd in diſtinguiſhing the word *other*; by which if he means *diſparate*, unconnected or unimply'd Points of Faith: No Divines of any number or account hold they can be *de novo*, much leſs our *Church*; If involv'd or *imply'd* in the main Point, he muſt ſhow 'tis *abſolutely* Another, and not rather a piece or part of the *Implying* one; as, *Homo eſt Animal*, is a part of *Homo eſt Animal rationale*. In the mean time let him conſider what Logick tells us, that *The Concluſion is in the Premiſes*, which re-

flexion will much unblunder his Thoughts; and withall, that 'tis moſt unreaſonable to deny the Church the Liberty to take aſunder her own Thoughts, and clear them, upon occaſion; by repreſenting their Parts diſtinctly or in many Propoſitions, which were invol'd before in ſome one. A priviledge Nature grants all Mankind as a neceſſary Conſeqent to their working by abſtracted Notions; this being no more than to regard or view the ſame thing now on one ſide, then on the other.

11. His Second Chief Demand is, *What ſecurity is there that in no Age of the Church any Practices ſhould come in which were not in the Precedent.* I anſwer, Our *Practices* ſpring from our *Tenets*; If then he means *Eccleſiaſtical* Practices, that is, ſuch as ſpring from Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitutions, there is no ſecurity at all; for theſe *are* to come in anew as oft as the neceſſity of Diſciplin or Government requires it: If he mean ſuch Practices, as ſpring from Points of Faith taught by Chriſt, there is the ſame ſecurity no ſuch new Practices can be introduc't as there is that no *new* Chriſtian *Tenets* can come in. Now theſe later Practices are thoſe we make uſe of in Tradition, as making Faith viſible, being as it were its *Body*: He muſt mean then of Theſe Practices to do his Diſcourſe any ſervice; and, ſo, of theſe he queſtions whether the Deſcendents *held themſelves bound unalterably to obſerve what their Forefathers did*; otherwiſe to *know* barely *what they* did, was not

enough

enough to make them *follow* it. He argues well. To ſmooth as many rubs as I can, that ſo we may have no difficulty but our main one, I would reflect on the ſignification of the word *unalterably*. For to introduce new Practices *conſequent* to the former is to propagate, enlarge, extend and ſo ſtrengthen them, not to *alter* them; in the ſame manner as to diſcourſe *conſequently* to a Principle or *Tenet*, is ſo far from *altering* it, that by the contexture of other Truths with it, it corroborates and eſtabliſhes it more *unalterably* its ſelf. They muſt then be Practices not of a *ſubordinate* but an *oppoſit* Nature to Chriſtian ones which can be fear'd to *alter* Chriſtian *Practices*. The Queſtion then is whether Children or the Succeeding Age held themſelves ſtill bound not to bring in Practices and Tenets *contrary* to the Doctrin and Practice of the Precedent Age. And, the Affirmative is moſt Evident, in caſe they held thoſe Tenets which Principled thoſe Actions, *True*, taught by Chriſt, and commanded by him as the Way to bring them to Heaven; and thoſe Practices *Conſequent*. If then they held the *deliver'd Doctrin Chriſt's*, they could not but hold themſelves oblig'd not to *alter* it, nor conſequently its Practices. So that our Queſtion is reſtrain'd to to a narrower compaſs, and the onely Difficulty now is whether they held the Doctrin of Foreſathers to be the Doctrin of *Chriſt*, or no.

12. I am heartily glad ſo acute an Adverſary

as Mr. *Stillingfleet* and one choſen out (if I am inform'd right) as a perſon conceiv'd the ableſt to write againſt Catholicks, has ſo candidly confeſt here, *p.* 629. That *the onely thing to be prov'd* in this caſe, is, *That every Age in the Church and all perſons in it looked upon themſelves as oblig'd not to vary in any thing from the Doctrin and Practice of the Precedent Age.* He offers me my choice of three wayes to prove it: I accept of the way of Reaſon. He preſſes for a *demonſtrative medium* to prove it; yet ſeems to diſlike our pretence to *Demonſtrations* for the Ground of our Faith. Not to note the unconſonancy of this carriage, I ſhall yeild him the honour of profeſſing he has *no* Demonſtration but onely *Probability* for the Ground of *his*; and to make this ſerious proteſtation for my ſelf, that I ſhould eſteem my ſelf very diſhoneſt did I aſſert and preſs on others any Argument for the Ground of my Faith which I judge not *Evident*, that is, *Demonſtrative.* This, I hope, will ſecure the Honeſty of my Intentions, however my Weakneſs may permit me to fail in my performance. After this he endeavours to foreſtal my Reaſon for the Point in theſe words; *They have underſtandings of another mould from others, who can conceive it Impoſſible that men ſhould not think themſelves oblig'd to believe and do all juſt as their Predeceſſours did.* Which words I deſire the Reader to review and note, for thence my Diſcourſe takes its riſe.

13. What

13. What is it then that we affirm the later Ages *oblig'd* to hold and act as their Forefathers held and acted? Wearing their clothes, or building their houſes? No; For, both, thoſe matters of their own nature are of trivial concern, and the faſhion of both depend on Fancy which is too fleight a Principle to oblige to a Conſtancy. What is it then? To manage their Eſtates thus or thus; no, for the Inconvenience or Convenience of the different wayes were perhaps held not very material, and the judging which was beſt depended upon Prudential Principles which are of their own nature variable and accommodable to circumſtances, and therefore not obliging them to think and Act as their Forefathers did. Let us proceed? Was it ſome piece of Skill or a Speculative Opinion depending on the Goodneſs or Badneſs of the Anceſtors knowledge? No: For, experience teaching that men differ in ſuch Judgments and are erraable, it could never oblige poſterity to believe Unalterably as They did. Is it then ſome Hiſtorical paſſage or matter of Fact, of great note, and as ſuch apt to ſtrike their Fancy ſtrongly, yet ſtill ſuch as the ſucceeding Age was not highly concern'd whether it were true or no; for example, that of *Alexander*'s Conqueſt of *Aſia* to the Aſian and Grecian off-ſpring of the next age after. No; Yet Experience tells us the memory of this is freſh and lively (even amongſt Us who are not the immediate deſcendents of thoſe

wher

where he conquer'd) though some thousands of years since.

14. Before we go any further, let's examin how this History comes to obtain so firm and unshaken a Beleef from the whole World to this very day. And, first, he must be a very weak Speculater that can think the universal and strong Perswasion of this matter of Fact was caus'd by Books, *Curtius* his History for Example; For, since all Mankind knows naturally that Falshoods may as easily be charactered in Letters as Truths; 'tis evidently the continu'd Beleef of the *Thing* or *Sence* in mens hearts of it's Truth, that is *Human Tradition*, which gives that Book all its Authority, and secures its strange Contents from being held Romanical; which the very *being-writ* could never have done. Let's see next whence this Human Tradition had its force to continue hitherto so settled and unalterable a Persuasion of *Alexanders* Conquests. And, looking into the Thing for Proper Causes, that is, the best *demonstrative medium*, we shall find the Object it self was very Universall, strange, notorious, and held of concern to the then livers; which made their Hearts and Fancies full of it, and so oblig'd them to burst out into Expressions of it, and relate it to their Off-spring of the next Age. I but, what *oblig'd* the Off-spring to beleeve their Forefathers telling it, and to act (or talk of it again to *their* Children) as the Fathers did; without which obligation it could not have

descended

descended to us. Regarding once more the Thing, we shall discover that it was imprinted into the Off-spring by the Forefathers *Testifying* what their senses had told them; which put, Common Sense inform'd them the thing was Infallibly-true, and as Certain as if they had seen it with their own eyes. For, no reach of Reason but onely Extravagance of Madness could have furnish't them with any imaginable motive, why the whole world should conspire to deceive them, or be decievable in their Sensations. By this means the Conceit of the Thing or matter of Fact (as to the *main*, for circumstantial Considerations were not so evident to all at first; and so could not be universally deliver'd as ascertain'd by Sence) was in the same degree of firmness and Certainty rivetted into the Hearts of next Age; and, so, there being necessarily in the Rational part of the World some curious persons, whom Nature her self could not but incline to an Inquisitiveness of what was done formerly, and others too naturally inclin'd to tell it Children who were capable of it and delighted with hearing such strange-true Stories; It went down continuing by the way of Tradition to our very dayes.

15. But we have over-shot our mark. The question is of the Obligation not to believe contrary to Forefathers from Age to Age. And, tis already evident, that the second Age after *Alexander* was oblig'd to beleeve the First, because They

saw

saw with their eyes what was done; But how could those in the Third Age be *oblig'd* to believe the Second who saw it not? To answer this, we must ask whether the third Age could be Certain that the second could not be deceiv'd in what the first Age told them (and the notoriousness of the Thing, being no speculation but a plain matter of Fact, secures that:) or conspire to bely the second Ages Authority; and, common reason satisfying them, by the circumstances, of the honesty of the persons, their Consent and the disinteressedness of the position, that they could not thus conspire, even the rudest have a Demonstration the second Age truly testifi'd what the First said; and so those of the third Age have the first Ages Authority certainly apply'd to them; and, by means of its Authority, its Sensations too, and perfect knowledge of the Thing springing from that Experimental Perception; which therefore must needs work the same Effect upon the third Age, as it did upon the second. And by virtue of the same Argument upon the the fourth, fifth, and five hundredth, while it is known to have come down by the way of Testification, and this is known by its being receiv'd in the five-hundredth Age *as testify'd*; For, if the second Age could not tell the third it was testify'd by the first unless it had been so testify'd, the same reason I have assign'd for the Impossibility of that will hold for each Age to the End of the world, that is, 'twill follow no Age could

say

ſay a former Age teſtifyd ſo, unleſs they did ſo; whence nothing can come in *as Teſtify'd* by a former Age, unleſs thus Teſtifyd. If therefore the five-hundredth Age receiv'd a thing as teſtify'd (ſuppoſing the notoreity of it ſecur'd the thing from miſtakableneſs) it follow'd demonſtratively it *was* teſtify'd; and, (to come cloſe to our purpoſe) that the deſcendents in each age, to the very end of the world, had the ſame Obligation to believe their immediate Forefathers ſaying it was teſtify'd by the former, as thoſe of the third Age to believe the ſecond, or the ſecond the firſt.

16. Who ever looks into Rational Nature, with even that ordinary Knowledge with which the rudeſt perſon almoſt that lives does upon *materiall natures*, would diſcern the ſame Neceſſity or Obligation of continuing down by the way of Teſtifying notorious and Important matters of Fact, fixt at firſt in the minds and fancies of an Univerſality by the Exiſtence of the Thing working on their Senſes, as that in a long chain of Iron, one link drawn ſhould draw all the reſt; or, that the turning the Firſt wheel, ſhould move a thouſand diſtant ones depending on its motion. Nor doubt I but it will be made full as Evident, when rational Souls come to ſet themſelves to reflect ſeriouſly on their own nature and procedure to Action; a ſpeculation few Proteſtants are acquainted with; Bookiſhneſs and much reading being onely in Vogue with the talking Tribe

Tribe amongſt them. In the mean time Mr. *Stillingfleet* may ſee in the Inſtance now put, that is, in the ſtrong Perſuaſion of *Alexander*'s Victories yet continuing by Tradition, that there is an Obligation in one Age to believe another when they proceed as Witneſſes; and this, not onely of what they ſaw, but of what others told them *They* ſaw, and of what ſome affirm'd they were told by others that the Age before Them ſaw; and ſo downwards; and that, as the Impulſive force is communicated from the Movers hand to the fartheſt-diſtant-wheel by the Application of the intermediate ones, the ſolid or Inflexible nature of the matter obliging the next wheel to propagate its motion; So the *Exiſtence* of the Thing mov'd the Firſt Experimental Percievers of it; and That ſolid Notion, which fixes every Truth, was the virtue which run thorough and gave force to all the reſt; being apply'd by Univerſal Witneſſing a plain matter of Fact (or others Teſtimonies) from each Age to the other; as great a Ty to Aſſent as Human Nature was capable of by natural means. For, that *Exiſtence* of the Thing was the virtue which made this Perſuaſion ſo ſolid and firm, beſides what's ſaid, is ſeen by this; that, were it deliver'd onely as an Opinion of the Things being ſo, its ſtrong conveyance had not been able to elevate it beyond Opinion; for, the ſtronger That had been, the more perfectly it had been held Opinion ſtill. The Exiſtence

then

then of the Thing had virtue to *oblige* to a full perſuaſion the thing *was ſo*, when *Apply'd* with Certainty; The Teſtification of the precedent Age is a Certain Applier of it, and Undoubtable, that is *Obliging to Belief*; therefore the next Age is (in ſuch matters convey'd down this way) as ſtrongly *oblig'd to believe* the foregoing as Reaſon can oblige it; that is, by ſeen *Effects* impoſſible to *be* without the Exiſtence of foregoing Teſtifications, nor they, finally, without the Exiſtence of the *Thing*.

17. I expect now what Mr *Stillingfleet* will reply to this diſcourſe. Will he ſay there were no Cauſes layd to *oblige* the After-comers to believe the Fore-goer, that *Alexander* conquer'd *Aſia*, but that it happen'd ſo by Chance? What will he ſay then to thouſand other ſuch matters of Fact, and indeed all that were done long ago; all which muſt either be held obligingly this way or none; (ſee *Cowll.* 24.) Beſides, the Cauſes proper to work on a *rationall Nature* are Reaſons: To ſay then there are no Cauſes able to make us believe *Alexander* thus conquer'd, is to ſay there is no Reaſon for it; and (Chance being nothing but a Cauſe unforeſeen by us) to ſay all believe it by Chance, ſignifies *none* ſee any reaſon why they believe it; which makes all the world Aſſes; Or have I not hit on the right Cauſes? I ſhall thank Mr *Stillingfleet* to help me out; and in the mean time aſſure him that whatever Cauſes he aſſignes, obliging poſterity

posterity, to believe Ancestours in this, shall strengthen Tradition. Perhaps he will say, they may be oblig'd to believe such *Histories* deliver'd, yet not deliver'd *Points of Faith*. I shall wonder at the position; but, because I foresee he is like to recurr to this (for he must be forc't to say either this or what's worse) I shall prepare against it, by parallelling the Obligation to believe this deliver'd History to the Obligation to believe Christian Faith deliver'd.

18. To do this more amply we will consider Christ's Doctrin according to the whole complexion of Circumstances expreſt in that common Verse,

Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando.

Quis? Who was the Authour and Subject of this Faith thus to be deliver'd; Not a poor mortal, but the Wisdome of the Eternal Father; not an ambitious self-extolling Man, but a self-humbled God, come down from his Heaven to be the World's Saviour and Master; every of whose Words and Actions were infinitely to be admir'd; and, consequently, requiring to be had in perpetual remembrance.

Quid? What thing was it which was deliver'd or Testify'd? A Doctrin containing Principles of the new Life they were to lead as Christians, and so Practical, notwithstanding the Majesty

Majesty of its abstrusenes; a Doctrin Connatural and sutable to Reason, Man's true Nature, and so apt to sink into him & not be easily relinquishable; A Doctrin which bears in its very notion to be a Guid towards Eternal Bliss, and consequently that to forsake it is the way to Eternal misery; which therefore oblig'd Fathers to teach it, and Children to esteem themselves bound to learn it and hold to it. Lastly, a Doctrin all made up of most astonishing miracle and wonder; and, so, apt to strike a deep sence of reverence into hearts already imbu'd with it. Such was the nature of the Thing we call Christ's Doctrin, imprinted on the Sensarions of the first Age of Christians; not a pittifull story of an *Alexander* or *Cæsar*; of Sleight concern, wonderment or practical Usefulnes; but, in comparison of the other, like a Tale of a Tub; which, no hurt is done if it go in at one ear and out ar the other.

19. *Ubi?* When was this matter of Fact or Preaching this doctrin performed? In all, even the remotest parts of the world, and not onely in a peece of *Europe* and in *Asia*; and this openly: Especially in *Rome* the world's *Metropolis*, whence it could easily and effectually spread into the rest, Nay in the very face of Tyrants; which things gave it a perfect Visibility; and, lastly, in every private Family it was taught and put in practice; which made it beyond dispute Sensible and Maniable as far as it conduces to Christian Life.

Quibus auxiliis? By what helps or means? By most ſtupendious miracles, powerful preaching and heavenly Living conformably to thoſe Principles; which made thoſe Principles of *Faith* viſible and evident. Not by three or four Victories, imputable perhaps to Chance; at leaſt in which nothing Divine diſcovered it ſelf engaged.

Cur? Why was this doctrin of Chriſts taught and practic't? not to ſatisfy the vain humour of impotent Ambition, but to deliver mankind from the Devils ſlavery and hell fire its reward, and to bring him to everlaſting Salvation.

Quomodo? By what manner? By writing it in the fleſhy Tables of the hearts of the Firſt Chriſtians; and, afterwards, continuing it by the way of *Teſtifying*; the moſt connatural way to oblige the Generality to Beleef of matters of Fact, that Nature knows.

Quando? When? In the Firſt Chriſtians when they were now at Age to judge of the miracles, and multitudes of Motives ſpoken of; which aw'd, overpower'd and ſubdu'd their Underſtandings to a firm Beleef and an high Reverence to the doctrin thus atteſted to be Gods: In the after-Chriſtians when they were yet ſcarce able to ſpeak much leſs to judge; and taught by nature to believe their Parents. Hence a lively and reverential conceit was bred in their Hearts, by others ſerious teaching and their own practiſing, of the Sacredneſs and conſequently Unalterableneſs, of that doctrin; ere they came to that Ripeneſs as

to

to use their own Judgment; Nay, that doctrin was so deeply naturaliz'd into them by Christian Life ere they came to maturity of Understanding that it became Unnatural and exceedingly violent for them to act and beleeve contrary to what Fathers had taught. Whereas the story of *Alexander* was not proper to be told Children till they were at Age and fit for some kind of Schollership; and then, it was so little practical that nothing was to be acted about it, but talking of it again; so that it lookt like a meer piece of Speculation and totally unconcerning them. I add, that this delivery by attestation or teaching went on linking the former Age to the later, by propagating it into new Subjects, not all at one time, but from year to year, moneth to moneth, and even less; according as the Understandings and even Bodies of Children budded into a Capacity of knowing saying or doing something which belong'd to Christianity; which still-continu'd Interweaving the former Age with the later, after a wonderful manner strengthens the sway of Tradition, and secures it both against Mistake and Deceit; neither of them having any possible place where the whole business is carry'd on by such immediate Steps.

20. I will not repeat over again th[illegible] unconceivable Advantages, but leave it to [illegible]*ingfleet*'s reflexion; and so, proceed to fra[illegible] discourse thus. If the conceited Sacredness, Concern, Necessity, Unalterableness, miraculously-attest-

ednes, also if the Visibleness, Practicalness with extent to every particular, connaturalness &c. found in the notion and nature of Christs doctrin or manifestly connected with it, render'd it incomparably recommendable in every respect above the Story of *Alexander*'s Conquests, and that plainest nature or Common Sense and daily Experience teaches us that, by how much more a thing is recommendable or deserving to be beleev'd and practic't, by so much more 'tis obligatory to be believ'd and practic't; and that we find in unconcerning Stories a continu'd Obligation layd in Nature for the Children to believe Parents (else such stories could never have descended with an hearty perswasion of their Truth hitherto) it follows that incomparably and in a manner infinitely greater must the Obligation be to believe Christ's Doctrin than *Alexander*'s or *William* the Conquerors Victories; or any History of the like nature whatever.

21. I have been much longer in such a point than the matter requir'd; it needed no more but to manifest that Common Sense tells us Nature obliges every man to believe those he takes to be *honest*; much more children Fathers: (or the next Age those of the former;) still more, if what they tell them be no Speculation depending on Fancy or private Judgment, but matter of Fact depending onely on Sense; that is, if they tell it them as *Witnesses*: But most of all, if they see we conspire in the same; For then the Obligation

gation is so necessary, that I cannot conceive that from the beginning of the world there was ever found one single person so unreasonable as not to yeild to it. Whence also we can show every first Beginner of an Heresie is αὐτοκατάκριτος, or *self-condemn'd*; that is, conscious to himself that out of Pride or some Passion he goes against Evidence of Authority. Now, in Tradition all is carry'd on this manner. So that, if the Explainers of Tradition have not made provision for this point, 'tis because they thought there could not be found a Considerer so unreasonable as to question it. Yet, because Mr *Stillingfleet* puts the whole stress of his Objection against Tradition in this, I shall (to give him further satisfaction) consider it practically.

22. Let us conceive then that the Apostles, Disciples, and Apostolical men, taught the first Age Christ's Doctrin (qualifi'd in the manner before declar'd) and recommended it as such (that is as Sacred, Unalterable, the way to Bliss. Taught by Christ &c.) by Miracles and other Supernatural means; 'tis plain They had Obligation to believe Christ taught it. Well, they receiving it as such, that is, as Christ's, and, so, Unalterable; were bound to recommend it for such to the next Age. Nor does Mr. *Stillingfleet* question this: But, were their Children oblig'd to believe them? While they were young tis plain they could do no other neither out of Reason nor Passion. But what were they oblig'd to when they were grown up to

ripeness of Judgement? 'Tis plain, that, were that Doctrin deliver'd as an Invention of their Forefathers, or some Collection of their Reason that it was Christ's, it was obvious for them to make this Discourse; We have natural Wit as well as our Parents had, and perhaps as good Circumstances to apply that wit, and why then should not we cast about and consider whether that be indeed Christ's Doctrin, and taught by the Apostles, which they would persuade us is so? But, in case it were deliver'd as ascertain'd by their Senses, to have been taught by the Apostles, what imaginable reason can they have of doubt? Can they think all their Fathers and Neighbours a pack of impudent Knaves, that conspire to abuse their posterity purposely to damn them, or that they could be mistaken in a Doctrin they were so highly concern'd to learn right, and had led their lives by ever since they were Christian? The third Age succeeds, whose Immediate Ancestours the Second Age told them they had been taught and brought up thus by the First. Nor have they more reason to doubt the Second Ages Attestation of the First Ages Doctrin and Life (it being an unmistakable matter of Fact) than the Second had the First's; that is, they were *oblig'd* to believe it. And, since each foregoing Ages Attestation is a plain matter of Fact, it follows that each succeeding Age has still equal obligation to believe the foregoing: Especially in a matter carrying along with it such powerful Recommends,

and

and this out of its very Nature, as that the preserving and holding to it would bring them Infinit Goods, and the altering it Infinit Harms. Thus it goes on; and while it goes on thus, that is, while this Rule is follow'd, 'tis self-evident no Heresie could ever be. (Disc. 5. § 8.) Whence by the way, if this be the onely difficulty in Tradition; (that is, in case the next Age were *oblig'd* to believe the former, Tradition would still be follow'd, and so it would be self-evident no Heretick could be) then it needs no proof they have such an *Obligation*; for 'tis questionless there is an Obligation for men not to be Hereticks.

23. Well, but an acute Wit or great Scholar arises who begins to question this way. Let's see if he have a good reason, if not he is still *oblig'd*. Can he bring an ampler or Certainer living Authority for the contrary? Where shall he have it? For all the Christian world is against him, if he be the first (and so onely) denier of this way of Tradition. Will he bring Demonstration against the Point? How can he against a Truth; for our case puts the point truly deliver'd, and onely enquires into the obligation of believing Ancestours in such a Delivery; and he must not hope a *seeming* Demonstration can free him from his Obligation of believing Ancestours. For, whence hapned it that it *seem'd* so to him when it was not such? From Perfection in Science in that particular? No surely; for then he had not miscarry'd: From the Imperfectness of his Sci-

ence? Then he ought the more to have *believ'd*: From Precipitancy? Then he ought not have been passionate. But, perhaps he will build on Dead Testimony, or some Book granted to be Sacred. In that case I ask, how knows he with such a Certainty as to build Faith and his opposition to the whole Church upon it (which ought be no less than a Demonstration) that he has the right Letter and Sence of that Book. Can he Demonstrate the exact conformity of its Letter from Copy to Copy, and Translation to Translation, and this up to the very Original? He may as well measure the back-side of Heaven. Will he recur to Traditions help? Tradition could onely perform this either by the way of diligent Examiners continu'd along and securely testifi'd, which (as was said) is impossible to show; Or by continu'd Sence in Christian Hearts, and then 'tis plain if their Sence preserv'd the Letter rightly significative, he ought to take the Sence of the Letter from them too, as the Fathers use to press upon ancient Hereticks. 'Tis left then that he must pretend he will demonstrate some former Age has err'd; How I wonder? We have excluded him Scripture, the nature of the Points, and Authority of living men. It may be he will alledge Testimonies of Historians, or Fathers. But, first, *Fathers*, taken as such, are not meerly great Scholars, but Eminent Parts of *Ecclesia docens* or Witnesses of the Doctrin *deliver'd*; Take away then the Certainty of *Delivery* or Tradition,

on, there's no Certainty of Doctrin *deliver'd*, nor consequently of *Fathers*. 2ly, An Historians Testimony signifies but his own private saying, unless authoriz'd by Sence writ in mens hearts or *Tradition*. 3ly, Are those Testimonies (and the like may be said of Scripture-proofs) evidently against the present Church, or no? If not, 'tis a madness to talk of *seeming* Testimonies against so vast and evident a one as that of the whole foregoing Church. If *Evident*, 'tis inconsistent with mans Nature the Christian Church should recommend down for true Fathers and creditable Historians those Authours which so evidently oppose her Doctrin: Or, if so great an Authority as the Churches delivers them down for fabulous or spurious, how can their Authority ever come to be undoubtable or Certain? The last refuge then of a passion-misled Reason is, asham'd of her want of Principles and loth to show her head, to pretend private Inspirations: which therefore is the last *non ultra* of all Heresies and the flower or most refin'd quitessence of all Faith-Reformation. But, miracles failing these poor Creatures to shew forth the hidden divinity which they pretend possesses them, they quickly fade away; or, if they make any further progress, 'tis into phrenzy or perfect Madness, as we experience in our most miserably-distracted Country; which disposition is therefore the *Caput mortuum*, or *Terra damnata* of Heresie, and the last and most natural effect of relinquishing Tradition.

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24. By this Discourse is seen that 'tis impossible the following Age and every person in it, unlearned and learned, should not be *oblig'd* to believe the foregoing delivering to them Christs Doctrin as receiv'd from hand to hand by way of Testifying: and that this Universal Obligation springs out of the Nature of that Heavenly Doctrin, and the Nature of the Way of conveying it downwards. 'Tis time now to review Mr *Stillingfleets* words against the possibility of proving this by Reason, and see how lank they look: They are these, neither more nor fewer: *It is hard to conceive what Reason should inforce it but such as proves the Impossibility of the contrary: And they have Understandings of another mould from others who can conceive it impossible men should not think themselves oblig'd to believe and do all just as their Predecessors did.* Is this Mr *Stillingfleet* who in the Appendix to his *Irenicum* ℘ 6. so rationally characters those for *more zealous than Judicious* discoursers who argue not out the *very Nature and Constitution* of a Thing; and here, in a discourse concerning the Rational way of looking into a point, quite overleaps all that concerns either the Nature or necessary circumstances of that Thing, and talks so rawly in common, that is, not one word to that particular purpose? Observe the words, *Oblig'd to believe and do ALL JUST as their Predecessors have done.* What means the word ALL? Does he mean we hold them oblig'd to cut their Beards, or wear such

ſuch Garters and Hatbands as their Fore-fathers did? His raw words reach no farther: What means the word JUST? Does he think Faith being planted in Human, that is *Rational*, Nature will not propagate it ſelf into conſequent and ſubordinate Tenets and Practices? All the wonder then of the Impoſſibility of the no-obligation lies in his crafty and ſophiſtical expreſſing it, which includes a fallacy of *non-cauſa pro cauſa*; for, not *any thing* convey'd down on *any faſhion* is held by us thus *obliging* to believe and act accordingly, but *ſuch* a Doctrin, and *ſo* convey'd as was before declared. Had he put our Poſition thus, as indeed he ought, it being the true caſe, *Children or Immediate Poſterity taught by Fathers or immediate Anceſtors relying on the way of Senſation, that ſuch a Doctrin was taught or deliverd to be taught by God himſelf, as moſt Sacred, Neceſſary to be believ'd and practic t by all, being the way to ſalvation, ſo that to vary from it, or hold or practiſe the contrary, is the way to eternal miſery, are all oblig'd to believe and act as their Forefathers did, and not introduce Contrary Doctrins and practices to thoſe they had receiv'd*: Had it been, I ſay, thus propos'd, there had been no ſuch cauſe of wonderment: But all theſe, that is indeed all of weight in the point is quite left out. Such poor ſhifts even the beſt Wits muſt be driven to, when they would maintain a falſe Cauſe.

25. One word to M. *Stillingfleet*. He hath challeng'd us to make out this *Obligation to Belief* as

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the *onely* Thing we are to prove in the Traditionary way; he hath offer'd us the choice of our Weapon, either *Reason*, *particular Testimony*, or *Universal Tradition*: I have accepted his offer, chosen my weapon, and given here the first blow; I hope he will not now run the Field, but return an Answer to my Discourse in the way of Reason, which I have chosen by his Offer. I am sorry for his sake my reflexions here are not more elaborate, being sent to the Press in loose quarters of sheets as soon as writ, more time not being allow'd me, nor I hope needful to answer such mistakes. Onely I request him when he replies, to take along with him the nature of the *subjecta materia*, the Doctrins and Practises we speak of; the Nature of the Manner of delivering it, and the necessary Circumstances which give weight to both, as I have declar'd above; and I promise him (God assisting me) a very serious Reply.

26. Ere I quite leave this matter, I desire to take the Reader along with me in my quest for a Reason or proper Cause why so judicious a person as Mr. *Stillingfleet* could come to doubt of such an Obligation in posterity to beleeve their Ancestours in a matter of fact, or a matter deliver'd to have been (not *deem'd* or *thought*, but) *done*; or (which is equivalent being it's necessary effect) *seen* or *known by Sense*. For, I make account there is not a man in the world or ever was (such is the Goodness of rational Nature given us by God)

God) who in his natural thoughts could ever raiſe ſuch a doubt, or think he could poſſibly frame his thoughts to a disbelief of the contrary; no more than any man in England (whom Speculative Scepticiſm has not beſotted and unmann'd) can doubt of *William* the Conqueror's, *Harry* the Eighth's, or *Mahomet's* Exiſtence; much leſs judge the contrary; And, it appears at firſt ſight to be a ſtrange diſtorſion or rather deſtruction of human Nature, which can ſo alter it. Now, looking into Things, I find it to be a proper and natural Effect of the Proteſtant's temper, and indeed of all who have left the Church. For their humour being to *chuſe* every one his Faith by his private Judgment or Wit working upon diſputable words; They wonder, and judge it very unreaſonable their Poſterity, thus imbu'd, ſhould *be oblig'd to beleeve and act as Anceſtours do*; *and* ſo ſhould I too. For, while they can never deliver it to their Children as received ever, by the way of Infallible Senſe or Witneſſing, but muſt ſay the former Church *de facto* err'd and conſequently that themſelves might do ſo too, ſo that they can only deliver it as depending or built on their own fallible Opinion in interpreting Scripture (all which is imply'd in their making Scriptur's Letter the Rule of Faith, and allowing no Living Interpreter able to give infallibly the Sence of it) 'tis natural their poſterity ſhould *not* hold themſelves oblig'd to beleeve Immediate Anceſtors, but uſe their own Judgments, and

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chuſe their own *Faith* when they come at Age as well as They did; and Experience tells us they have done ſo in England till they have choſen fairly. And this horrid Unreaſonableneſs is the venomous ſource, the Firſt defective Principle, or indeed the very nature of all *Hereſie*, imported alſo in the very word, which ſignifies *Choice*, or *chuſing one's Religion*; mention'd by *Clemens Alexandrinus* (cited above p. 135.) and counterpoſ'd by him to *Tradition* as alſo by S. *Athanaſius* (cited p. 133. 134.) where 'tis moſt excellently deſcrib'd, and homely apply'd to the Proteſtants and ſuch others, as the Reader may ſee. I am a bad Tranſcriber.

27. I have done my main taſk, and ſo ſhall only touch at his next paragraph. It begins thus; *It is to no purpoſe to prove the Impoſſibility of motion when I ſee men move, no more it is to prove no Age of the Church could vary from the foregoing when we can evidently prove they have done it.* You argue well. But two things are requir'd ere you can *ſee* our Faith varies from the former. Firſt, To *ſee* what our Church holds *now*, and then *to ſee* what the former Church held before; and if I ſee any thing you ſee neither well. For, while you cannot diſtinguiſh between *Faith* and its *Explication*, ſome School-men and Church, I have no hopes you ſhould ſee candidly what our Church holds *now*: and, if you cannot at preſent ſee what our Church holds *now*, how and by what method will you aſſure us you ſee what

what She held *formerly*? The thing to be prov'd is a plain matter of Fact, and you have renounc't all living Attestation the common and secure way to bring it down; and consequently Fathers too; For Fathers (speaking of them as such) being Evident Witnesses, Transmitters or Propagaters of the *Faith received* to Immediate Posterity, if you question *Delivery* or *Tradition* (which you do while you doubt Obligation in Posterity to believe Ancestours) you question whether there be any *Doctrin deliver'd* and so any *Fathers*: and I wonder how you can imagin any man oblig'd to believe Fathers, Historians or any that writ or testify'd things long ago, and yet think the next age not oblig'd to believe the former in a matter of Fact done in their own dayes. How far short then are your Evidences of the former Churches Doctrin, like to prove of being parallell to our *seeing a man move with* our corporeal *Eyes*! But you *may* say any thing; or rather indeed, forc't by your bad Cause, you *must* do so.

28. You call this Way of ours a *Superficial Subtility*; I beseech you consider what you say; Is that which is wholly builds on the Nature of the Things (as you see ours does) *Superficial*; or Yours which is meerly an airy Descant upon *dead Words*? What do you think *Controversy* is? I deal plainly with you, you may take it to be an Art of Talking, and I think you do so though you will not profess it; but I take it to

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be a noble Science; I hold its Object to be *rationem reddere fidei*, or to maintain *question'd Faith*, which is chiefly done by showing the Authority on which Faith depends *quoad nos* Certain. Hence, all other Authority depending on Tradition-s, I hold Knowledge of its Certainty the First Principle in *Controversy*; And this being *quoad nos* necessarily antecedent to Authority, it can onely be manifested by Reasons taken from Things or men's Minds, *naturally*, and (if we discourse against those who grant the excellency of the first-preached Doctrin) *Supernaturally* affected or qualify'd; as he sees I have endeavour'd in my Discourses.

29. So much for our Way. Now for yours: Who sees not first how *Words as interpretable* are its *subject*; and if in the method you take to work upon them you lay one Principle which deserves the name of a Principle, I dare undertake to be of Mr. *Stillingfleet*'s persuasion. He sees in my TRANSITION our Way laid open; Either let him acknowledge it solid, or remember, having provok't us, he is challeng'd to produce something for his Rule of Faith, which begins with the natures of the Things in hand, that is of *Rule* and *Faith*, and approves it self solider than ours. But 'tis so impossible their Cause can endure the Trial of that *clearing* Method, that I fear not either Mr. *Stillingfleet* or any Protestant Writer of the least prudence will dare to attempt it.

Will

30. Will you ſee one Example of our Superficialneſs and Mr. *Stillingfleet*'s Solidneſs? He gives you both in his next words, p. 620. and aſſures the Reader we would prove *no alteration in the Faith of the Church* by ſuch an Argument as would prove the world *ab æterno*. How ſtrangely wide he roves from the mark? Our Argument runs thus, beginning *à priori*; Cauſes were laid in the nature of Chriſts heavenly Doctrin, and the nature of its Conveyance down by Teſtifying, to make its Delivery continu'd hitherto; *à poſteriori* thus; we find a preſent Effect (the preſent Perſuaſion of Chriſtians their Faith deſcended uninterruptedly from Chriſt) impoſſible to be without ſuch a Cauſe's Exiſtence or its having been at firſt taught by Chriſt; whence we conclude that Faith came from Chriſt: Let us parallel it then to his. Finds he any ſuch Effect in the world at preſent apt to ſpring onely from the Worlds Eternity as its Cauſe; or Cauſes laid *ab æterno* in the nature of the world apt to continue it hitherto? If he does, he muſt hold it was Eternal; If not, how unconſonant is his parallel? He makes our Argument run thus; *The preſent Age ſees no alteration in it, and they could not be deceiv'd in what their Forefathers believ'd, nor they in theirs, and ſo on* in infinitum; *for no men did ever ſee the World made, and therefore it was never made, and ſo Eternal.* In return, I muſt firſt profeſs there is not a tittle in it parallel to our *medium*; and, at next, that I never ſaw in my

ſife more abſurdities couch't in ſo few words. For,

Firſt, he ſhould have begun, the preſent Age has a firm perſwaſion it was ever, or have alledg'd ſome other Effect, without which 'tis impoſſible to argue to the Exiſtence of a thing before, or a Cauſe.

2ly. He wrongly ſuppoſes a Belief in the former Age of the Worlds ever-Exiſtence, ſaying, *They could not be deceiv'd in what their Forefathers believ'd.*

4ly. The words, *Nor they in theirs*, falſely ſuppoſe a Continuance of belief upwards of the worlds Eternity.

5ly. He ſayes not whether this Belief was founded on Ey-ſight at firſt, or Opinion. If the later, 'tis contrary, and not parallel to our caſe. If the former, then he muſt ſuppoſe ſome man ſaw the world made *ab æterno.*

6ly. The words, *and ſo on* in Infinitum, ſuppoſe this belief did go on *in Infinitum*; which put, 'tis beyond queſtion, and plac't in the very Terms, that the world *was* Eternal.

7ly. His reaſon for the laſt words, thus, *For no man did ever ſee the World made*, is manifoldly faulty: for 'tis a negative argument, and, as ſuch, inconſequent; ſince the world might have been made, whether any had ſeen it or not. Again, the firſt men might have known it certainly to have been made, whether they had ſeen it *making* or no. And laſtly, 'tis directly contradictory to

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what it should parallel; For, we agreeing with them that Christ and his Apostles did teach a Doctrin thus qualify'd, first put its Existence *sear*, and thence conclude the contrary could never come to be held universally; or else, we take a present-Belief of its then-Existence as ever receiv'd by Testifying: neither of which have any correspondence with his rambling chimerical Argument; no two pieces of which hang together with themselves or any thing else.

31. He sayes, he can *evidence* the Alteration of Faith. I wish he would tell us first what an *evidence* means; whether a strong *Fancy* of his own, or a *Demonstration*, onely which can excuse him or not believing the former Age Attesting. His first proof is, *Because the Scripture supposes a degeneracy in the Christian Church*: Incomparably argu'd! why see we not the place! Does it *evidently* speak of *Faith* or *Manners*; the *universal* Church, or *particular* persons; that is, some Hereticks? But be it in Faith; Be it Universal. Does it suppose this Degeneracy *already past* (which is onely proper to your purpose) or *yet to come*? That is, does it say there must be a Total Apostasie in Faith before the Year 1664? Alas, he had forgot this: Yet for such wretched proofs as these, baptiz'd *God's Word*, have they left the evidently-attested Doctrin and the Union of the former Church. His next *Evidences* are his own Performances in

some other parts of his Book. Truly the miserableness of these *Evidences* dissuade me from thinking the other worth a serious thought: But, if perhaps there be ever a Testimony among them that is not coincident with some of Dr. *Pierces* faulty ones; Let him single it out and Print it at the End of his Rejoynder to this, it shall have a fair Answer from me, or some other more proper.

FINIS.

THE HEADS.

First Discourse.

Shewing from the nature of Rule and Faith, what Properties belong to the Rule of Faith. p.1.

Second Discourse.

Shewing the two first Properties of the Rule of Faith utterly incompetent to Scripture. p.12.

Third Discourse.

That the three next Properties of the Rule of Faith are utterly incompetent to Scripture. p.22.

Fourth Discourse.

That the two last Properties of the Rule of Faith are clearly incompetent to Scripture. p.33.

Fifth Discourse.

Shewing the notion of TRADITION, and that all the Properties of the Rule of Faith *do clearly agree to It.* p.41.

Sixth Discourse.

Endeavouring to demonstrate à priori *the Indefectibleness of Tradition.* p.57.

Seventh Discourse.

An Objection clear'd, and the Beginning and Progress of an Heresy connaturally laid open. p.65.

Eighth Discourse.

Endeavouring to demonstrate à posteriori *the Uninterruptedness of Tradition hitherto.* p.75.

Ninth

THE HEADS.

Ninth Discourse.

Opening the Incomparable Strength of the Churches Human Authority, and the Infinit Advantages accrue to it by the Supernatural Assistances of the Holy Ghost. p.81.

Corollaries from the former Discourses. p.93.

Consent of Authority to the Substance of the foregoing Discourses. p.126.

Transition to the Appendixes: p.157.

First Appendix. *Animadversions on the groundlesness of Dr.* Pierce's *Sermon.* p.167

Second Appendix. *Animadversions on some passages in Mr.* Whitby. p.179.

Third Appendix. *Animadversions on some passages in Mr.* Stillingfleet. p.201.